

Cairo rejects criticism over human rights

CAIRO (R) — Interior Minister Hassan Al Ali dismissed criticism of Egypt's human rights record, saying that monitoring groups were a fad and that human rights should not apply to criminals and murderers.

"We pay no attention to the tendentious allegations which are made against us in this," he said in an interview in the government newspaper Akhbar Al Yom on Saturday.

"Human rights organisations are the fashion of the age. They are used by many agencies to influence societies and peoples. They all work for political purposes which are no secret to anyone," he added.

The minister's comments were the first direct or indirect reaction to two recent reports on torture in Egyptian prisons. The Egyptian Organisation for Human Rights (EOHR) said last month that torture was routine at a prison which holds about 4,000 men, many of them suspected Muslim militants. Earlier in May the U.N. Committee Against Torture called on Cairo to fully investigate cases of mistreatment, especially by state security intelligence, and bring perpetrators quickly before the courts. But General Ali retorted: "We have announced many times that there is a law in Egypt to deal with any abuses. Those who make mistakes or commit abuses are called to account." Where were these groups when crimes of terrorism were happening every day and bombs were going off in the heart of Cairo? Human rights are the rights of any society to live in peace...not the rights of some criminals who terrorise societies by murder and explosions," he added.

Gen. Ali said the Muslim Brotherhood, established over 70 years ago, had connections abroad that finance its activities. The Brotherhood has been

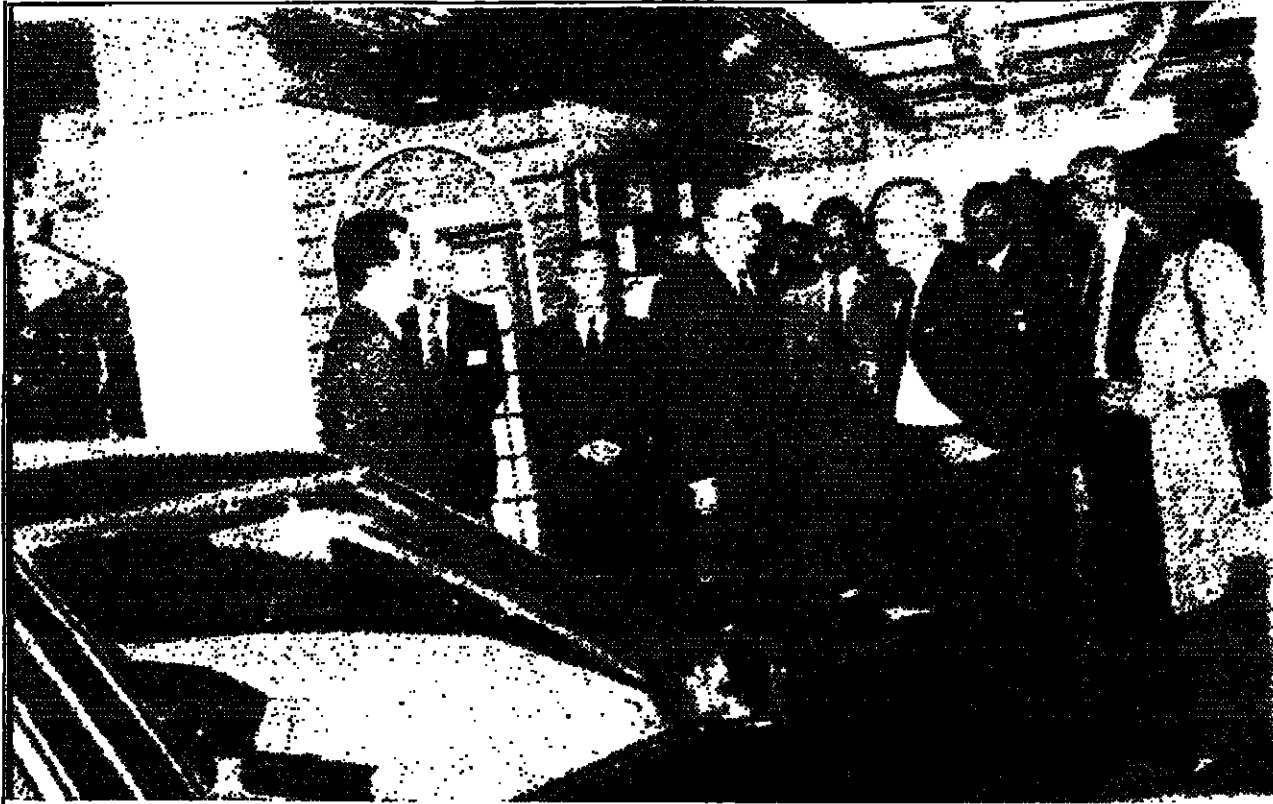
banned since 1954. Successive governments have turned a blind eye to their activities but the present government has tried to equate the group with violent Muslim militant groups such as the Gama'a Al Islamiya (Islamic group) and Jihad (holy struggle) group. "The Muslim Brotherhood is the key to the whole problem. It has deep roots in Egypt and it has tried and is still trying to reach power through legal or illegal means," said Gen. Ali. Thirteen men, mostly members of the Brotherhood, went on trial in military court on Saturday accused of running an organisation which aimed to undermine the constitution and planning to agitate the masses against the present government.

When the 13 were arrested, Brotherhood spokesman Ma'moun Al Hodeibi said the state had resorted to trying the men in a military court because it did not have enough evidence to indict them in a civilian one.

Assailants killed

Two of the militants, who shot dead 18 Greek tourists near the pyramids in April have been killed by security forces, Gen. Ali said. "After identifying those responsible for the attack, police tried to arrest them in an ambush," Gen. Ali told Akhbar Al Yom. But "they fired on policemen who returned fire and two of them were killed," Gen. Ali added, without saying when the ambush took place or whether the other militants were arrested.

He said the pair had weapons in their possession which were examined by ballistics experts and proved to have been used in the April 18 attack on the Greek tourists. "The names of the terrorists will be published soon," he said.



BRITISH WEEK: Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abul Ragheb on Saturday talks with British Ambassador Peter Hinchcliffe after opening a British trade exhibition as part of a British Week in Jordan (Petra photo)

King Fahd attends soccer match

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Arabia's King Fahd, whose state of health has triggered speculation he might abdicate, attended a soccer match in Jeddah on Friday night, the official Saudi news agency reported. It said the Saudi monarch, who suffered a stroke in November and handed over the running of state to Crown Prince Abdullah while he recovered, presented the winners of the match with their trophy and medals. A Saudi newspaper on Saturday carried photographs of the king standing up and waving to the crowd at the stadium and signing a football. The U.S. magazine Time reported last month that King Fahd was suffering from dementia, and might soon leave the country permanently, delegating power to Prince Abdullah.

The report and others that followed his stroke sparked questions about the future in Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest oil producer and exporter and influential Middle East player.

57 rebel Kurds killed on Turkish-Iraqi frontier

ANKARA (Agencies) — Fifty seven Kurdish rebels have been killed by the Turkish army in military operations south of Cukurca, on the border with Iraq, the Anatolia news agency reported Saturday.

One Turkish soldier died in the fighting, the news agency added. The latest casualties bring to 146 the number of rebels from the Kurdistan Labour Party (PKK) killed since Wednesday in the Cukurca region as a Turkish offensive against the rebels continues, according to Turkish figures. The PKK has been leading an armed rebellion since 1984 against the Turkish government to carve out a separate Kurdish homeland in Turkey's southeast, on the border with Syria, Iran and Iraq.

Twelve years of fighting have claimed nearly 22,000 lives, including rebels, soldiers, police and civilians. On Friday, 50 Kurdish rebels were killed around Cukurca as Turkish forces pressed ahead with the latest campaign in the north of the country, military sources in Ankara said. The major Turkish newspa-

per Hurriyet reported that 5,000 Turkish troops moved into Iraq to chase down rebels, who have rear bases inside Iraqi territory. Kurdish rebels, frequently launch hit-and-run attacks from their bases in northern Iraq.

Army units along the Iraqi border are authorised to attack when they pinpoint large groups of rebels. Last year, a six-week incursion involving 35,000 troops drew heavy criticism from Turkey's western allies and was not very successful because the rebels got advance news of the offensive.

Meanwhile, a three-month anti-guerrilla campaign continued in Turkey's southeast. Twenty guerrillas were killed in clashes in the southern provinces of Mardin and Van on Friday, the agency said. The campaign has claimed the lives of about 870 rebels and 100 soldiers.

In Germany, about 200 Kurds blocked the Elmd crossing point with Denmark for several hours on Saturday after German officials refused to let them enter the country, police in the northern German city of Kiel said.

Ashrawi sworn in as minister

NABLUS (AP) — Hanan Ashrawi, an outspoken Palestinian human rights advocate and erstwhile critic of Yasser Arafat, was appointed a minister in his autonomy cabinet Friday.

"I swear to God I will work for the benefit of my people," said Dr. Ashrawi, smiling as she took the oath of office with her right hand on a new testament.

Mr. Arafat congratulated Dr. Ashrawi and shook her hand while cabinet members broke out in applause. Social Affairs Minister Intissar Al Wazir, the only other female cabinet member, then gave her new colleague a kiss.

Dr. Ashrawi, a 49-year-old Christian resident of Jerusalem, was among the first Palestinians to seek a dialogue with Israel and became a familiar figure abroad as the articulate, combative spokeswoman for Palestinian negotiators in the early 1990s.

In 1992, the former English literature professor was sidelined by the election of a moderate Israeli government that dealt directly with Mr. Arafat and the Palestine Lib-

NEWS IN BRIEF

U.N. investigators to visit Mideast

GENEVA (AFP) — The special UN committee that investigates Israeli respect for human rights in the occupied territories is to visit the Middle East next week, though it has been barred from the territories themselves. The three-member committee will visit Egypt, Jordan and Syria during a tour from June 22 to 30, the United Nations Information Service said here, adding that it had solicited Israeli cooperation several times but in vain. The committee's sources include first-hand accounts, Israeli press reports and Arabic publications from Israel and the occupied territories. In its last report of 27, submitted to the U.N. General Assembly last September, the committee warned that support for the peace process in the occupied territories could give way to discouragement and even despair over lack of progress, with negative consequences. The report singled out for criticism Israeli curbs on freedom of movement. The team comprises Hermann Leonard De Silva, Absa Claude Diallo, and Abdul Magid Mohammad, the ambassadors to the U.N. of Sri Lanka, Senegal and Malaysia respectively.

Omani leader leaves Egypt

CAIRO (AFP) — Sultan Qaboos of Oman ended a five-day visit here Saturday after talks with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on preparations for an Arab summit next week in Cairo. The Omani leader also met with Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdul Meguid to discuss efforts to overcome differences between Arab states, Egyptian officials said. Oman and 20 other Arab League members have accepted Mr. Mubarak's invitation to attend the June 22-23 summit, the first in six years. Only Iraq has not been invited.

Arafat to visit China beginning Monday

BEIJING (AFP) — Palestinian President Yasser Arafat is to arrive in China on Monday for a state visit, his first in nearly three years, the foreign ministry said in an announcement carried by Xinhua. Mr. Arafat, who last visited in September 1993, is expected to stay for three days, according to Palestinian sources. His talks with Chinese officials are expected to cover the impact on the Arab-Israeli peace process of Israel's recent election of a right-wing prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu.

Clinton to meet with Cypriot president

WASHINGTON (AFP) — A meeting between President Bill Clinton and Cyprus President Glafcos Clerides, originally scheduled for Tuesday, will instead take place Monday, the White House announced. A U.S. official said Friday the change was made simply because of scheduling problems. Among other things, the two leaders are expected to discuss how the United States can promote a durable peace between the Greek and Turkish communities in Cyprus. -ibo

Malek to head anti-Islamist party

PARIS (R) — Former Algerian Prime Minister Redha Malek, an anti-Islamist hawk, has been elected chief of the Republican National Alliance (ANR), party officials said on Saturday. The 57-year-old Malek was elected at a party congress of 700 delegates which ended on Friday night. Mr. Malek said in a speech the "unconditional eradication of terrorism and the strict implementation of the law are the way for building a modern and stable Algeria," the officials said. The ANR, which was founded by Mr. Malek, voiced support for President Liamine Zeroual's reform and election plans. It also said radical Islamists were Algeria's most urgent challenge. An estimated 45,000 people have been killed in political violence pitting government forces against guerrillas since early 1992, when the army-backed authorities cancelled an election the Islamists were set to win. Mr. Malek was a member of the five-man presidency which took power then. He became prime minister in 1993 until April 1994.

Torrential rains kill eight in Yemen

SANAA (R) — Yemen's heaviest rains in 30 years, which started on Friday and were continuing, have killed eight people, a security official said on Saturday. "Six people were killed in Shabwa governorate—three women, two children and an old man," the official told Reuters. Shabwa is 460 kilometres southeast of Sanaa. The official also said the rains swept through Marib governorate, 175 kilometres north of Sanaa, killing an old man, and that another man was killed in Al Bayda governorate, 270 kilometres south of Sanaa.

Fate of human rights activist depends on court and Arafat

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — The fate of a leading Palestinian human rights campaigner is hanging in the balance amid a legal battle to save him from Gaza Strip military justice and questions over when and whether Yasser Arafat will intervene.

Raji Sourani, the lawyer for Iyad Sarraj, 53, head of the Palestinian Independent Commission on Citizens Rights, said the Gaza Strip high court of justice, a civilian court, will hear his petition Sunday demanding the immediate release of Dr. Sarraj.

Dr. Sarraj, a British-trained psychiatrist, was arrested Sunday for the third time in six months, and remanded Thursday by a military tribunal for 15 days.

The appeal, and action by Mr. Arafat, are all that stand between Dr. Sarraj being tried by a tribunal of security officers on Palestinian National Authority (PNA) charges that he assaulted a policeman in jail. Dr. Sarraj denies the charges and says the policeman beat him.

"These (military) courts are in camera, they offer the defendant no access to counsel, to his family or to the media and the sessions are usually held in the middle of the night," Mr. Sourani said.

PNA officials signalled Friday that Mr. Arafat has not moved yet on calls for the release of Dr. Sarraj, including one Thursday by Palestinian legislative council speaker Ahmad Qouria.

"For the time being this matter

is all in the hands of the security people," said Nabil Abu Radaina, Arafat's press adviser. Fayed Abu Rahme, a Gaza Strip attorney with close ties to Arafat, also urged Friday that Dr. Sarraj be freed. "I think he is entitled to be released from this case of assaulting," he said.

"He has a good reputation and is respected by so many people," Abu Rahme added.

Sarraj has been a sharp critic of what he termed in a recent letter to Arafat "corruption, favouritism and torture" under the PNA.

Dr. Sarraj said in court he believes the letter angered Arafat and set in motion the renewed arrest. Before the launch of self-rule, he blasted Israeli practices during

the Jewish state's occupation of the Gaza Strip.

The assault charges were brought Thursday before a military tribunal, just before a civilian court dismissed a request that Dr. Sarraj be remanded for two weeks for purported possession of hashish.

The military tribunals were formed last spring in response to Israeli demands for rapid-fire patrols of Muslim militants.

Almost all of their sessions have been held at short notice behind closed doors and they have been sharply criticised by Amnesty International and other rights organisations for denying due process of law.

Dr. Sarraj was also jailed for nine days last month after giving

an interview to the New York Times in which he said the PNA was "corrupt, dictatorial and oppressive," criticised the self-rule agreements with Israel, and that he had been much freer to voice his views under Israeli military occupation.

His arrests have prompted widespread protests by Palestinian and Israeli human rights groups and appeals for his release from foreign governments.

Bassem Eid, a Palestinian human rights worker for the Israeli B'tselem human rights organisation, called Friday on foreign governments to suspend financial assistance to the PNA "until they improve their human rights practices."

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Hanna Mansour 750197
Dr. Afif Shukri 898863
Dr. Nidal Al Dahleh 827195
Dr. Sa'id Tawfik 788285
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asma pharmacy 637055
Nairokh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Shmeisani pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Nairokh pharmacy 623672
Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:
Dr. Mazen Abu Bakir 276852
Alquds pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Hilal Al Sayid 986702
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 630341
Rescue 630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 603800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 787111
Amman Municipality 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Repairs 661101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 773111
Jordan Television 774111
Radio Jordan 680100
Water Authority 815615
Electric Power 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn 644281/6
Alkheh Maternity, J. Amn 64341/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 607071

Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Mushar Hospital 667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali 666127/7
Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajirah 77101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 77511/26
Army, Marika 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 612340/51
Amal Hospital 617155
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital 09198323
Zarqa National Hospital 09198323
Ibn Sina Hospital 09198323
Al-Hikmah Modern Hospital 09198323
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 86519
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital 02127355
Greek Catholic Hospital 02127275
Ibn al-Walid Hospital 02126710
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital 03131111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (06)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

09:30 Jeddah (RJ)
10:05 Dhahran, Riyadh (RJ)
10:10 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:20 Beirut (RJ)
10:50 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
16:05 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
16:25 Amsterdam, Brussels (RJ)
18:25 Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)
18:50 London (RJ)
19:00 Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
19:25 Istanbul (RJ)
19:45 Jeddah (RJ)
19:45 Frankfurt (RJ)
20:25 Rome (RJ)
20:30 Tunis (RJ)
22:25 Vienna (RJ)
01:10 Cairo (RJ)

Other Flights

11:00 Sanaa (IY)
13:00 Doha (O7)
13:40 Bahrain (GF)
15:05 Moscow (SU)
16:30 Dubai (EK)
20:35 Cairo (MS)
21:10 Beirut (ME)
22:15 London, Beirut (BA)
23:30 Istanbul (TK)
23:30 Athens (OA)
01:20 Amsterdam, Beirut (KL)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:35 Beirut (RJ)
09:30 Frankfurt (RJ)
12:00 Tunis (RJ)
12:15 Rome (RJ)
12:15 Ankara, Istanbul (RJ)
12:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
21:10 Cairo (RJ)
21:20 New Delhi (RJ)
21:20 Jeddah (RJ)
21:45 Damascus (RJ)
22:20 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
22:45 Singapore, Jakarta (RJ)
22:50 Bangkok (RJ)
23:45 Sanaa (RJ)

Other flights

06:40 London (KL)
09:15 Beirut, London (BA)
11:05 New Castle (CK)
12:00 Sanaa (IY)
14:30 Beirut (ME)
16:05 Moscow (SU)
21:25 Cairo (MS)
02:30 Amsterdam (KL)
04:50 Athens (OA)
06:00 Istanbul (TK)

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apricot 840 / 600
Apple 700 / 500
Banana 600/00
Banana (Mukammal) 520/50
Banana (imported) 760/50
Cabbage 70 / 50
Carrot 160/100
Cauliflower 180/130
Cucumber (large) 160/70
Cucumber (small) 160 / 100
Eggplant 210 / 140
Garlic 600/40
Lemon 630/40
Marrow (large) 150 / 100
Marrow (small) 240 / 180
Mushroom 160/10
Onion (dry) 120 / 80
Okra 1200 / 700
Orange 370/300
Peach 660/450
Pepper (hot) 380 / 280
Pepper (sweet) 440/30
Potato 260/160
String Bean 500 / 350
Tomato 120/70
Water melon 100 / 70

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 77311-19

PROGRAMME TWO

15:00 Cartoon — The Mask
15:30 Mac and Muttley
17:00 Flash news
17:02 Ordy
17:15 La Vie Devant Moi
17:30 Que Le Meilleur Gagne
18:00 Magazine — Envoye Special
19:00 1996 European Championship
20:55 Fresh Prince of Bel-Air
21:30 Daily Summary — Japan Week
1996 European Championships
22:15 News in English
22:25 Second Half

PRAYER TIMES

03:50 Fajr
05:25 (Sunrise) Duha
12:36 Dhuhur
16:16 'Asr
19:47 Maghrib
21:22 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Switkhah, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terzasteta Church Tel. 623266
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Temperatures are expected to rise above average by two degrees centigrade with winds northwesterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.

Amman 20 / 32
Aqaba 24 / 38
Deserts 18 / 36
Jordan Valley 24 / 37

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 32, Aqaba 38, Humidity readings: Amman 38 per cent, Aqaba 34 per cent.

Dole moves up fast on Clinton in new poll

WASHINGTON (R) — A new public opinion poll Friday showed President Bill Clinton's lead over prospective Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole down significantly in a month, to six percentage points.

The CNN/Time magazine poll gave Democrat Clinton the support of 49 per cent of respondents and Sen. Dole 43 per cent. A month ago Mr. Clinton led 56 to 34 per cent. The poll had a margin of error of plus or minus 3.5 per cent.

The poll was the first to be taken since Sen. Dole resigned his Senate seat Tuesday. It might also reflect the effect of the Whitewater case and the latest White House's improperly gathering of more than 400 personal FBI files, including those of some prominent Republicans.

Sen. Dole also appeared to have benefited from his call for a clause to be added to the Republican anti-abortion platform stating tolerance for party members who support abortion rights. The poll showed wide support for Sen. Dole's stance.

This survey was the first in several months to show Mr. Clinton leading by less than 10 percentage points. Unless or until its findings are duplicated in other polls, it may be regarded with some caution. Other recent polls have shown Mr. Clinton's lead at a steady 15 to 20 percentage points.

The survey showed Mr. Clinton's approval rating still at a healthy 50 per cent, but six points lower than a month ago. Sen. Dole, campaigning in Alabama and Georgia, reacted cautiously to the results.

"Obviously when the polls look good you're happier, they look bad, you're not happy. But my view is that polls are polls. I don't know what it means. I assume we got a little bump out of leaving the Senate but I can only do that once," he told reporters aboard his plane.

But Republican Party Chairman Haley Barbour said the poll showed Sen. Dole's campaign was beginning to catch fire.

"The American people are responding enthusiastically because they are beginning to hear the Republican message as we engage in advertising and as Bob Dole travels the country as a full-time candidate," he said.

"The American people are also rightly disgusted with a White House that spawns a new ethical or legal controversy practically every day," Mr. Barbour said.

A Clinton campaign official, who asked not to be named, said internal polling by Mr. Clinton's pollsters did not show the race tightening.

"This doesn't track anything we see. There's been no real

movement over the past couple of months. This looks like a statistical freak," the official said.

Meanwhile Sen. Dole said Friday he had asked retired Gen. Colin Powell to campaign with him but did not believe Gen. Powell was interested in being his vice presidential nominee.

On the third day of his eight-state campaign swing celebrating his resignation from the Senate to seek the presidency full-time, Sen. Dole again tore into President Clinton over White House handling of FBI files on Republicans who had worked in previous administration.

A Fox News poll to be released Sunday of 900 likely voters put Mr. Clinton's lead at 42 per cent to 32 per cent for Sen. Dole, but when Gen. Powell was listed as Sen. Dole's vice presidential nominee, it was a 43-43 tie between Mr. Clinton and Sen. Dole.

Gen. Powell has repeatedly ruled out seeking office this year but speculation about his being coaxed onto the Republican ticket with Sen. Dole has increased with reports that Gen. Powell was travelling with former President George Bush. Gen. Powell served as Mr. Bush's chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and they remain close.

"I'd like to have him here right here today and everywhere I go," Sen. Dole told reporters in Birmingham, Alabama. "I've asked him if he'd be willing to travel with me and things of that kind and he's going to let me know when he comes back."

But he called it "just a rumour" that Mr. Bush was trying to talk Gen. Powell into the No. 2 spot on the Republican ticket and said he had heard that Mr. Bush and Gen. Powell were "going fishing together for a few days."

In Savannah, Sen. Dole told reporters that having Gen. Powell campaign for him would serve as an energising force to rally his battle to unseat Mr. Clinton.

On the flight to Winston-Salem, Sen. Dole said he had no list of vice presidential possibilities but he would start working on that soon.

He said he did not believe Gen. Powell, with whom he talked last week, wanted to run for office this year.

"I think he's made his decision — no elective office in 1996. We didn't get into specifics. I'm sure he thought about all of this before he decided not to run for president," Sen. Dole said.

"He's a great American. I'm very proud he's a Republican. But I don't think he has any real interest in being on the ticket in '96."

FBI inquiry criticises White House on background reports

WASHINGTON (R) — An FBI inquiry sharply criticised the Clinton White House for improperly obtaining more than 400 sensitive background files in a serious invasion of privacy. FBI Director Louis Freeh said Friday.

Mr. Freeh, announcing the results of a week-long FBI probe into the escalating controversy, said it found "egregious violations of privacy" had occurred. He also said more files were involved over a longer period of time than previously reported.

Saying the FBI had failed to safeguard the files adequately against "negligent or intentional misuse," he ordered it to adopt immediately sweeping reforms aimed at preventing future abuses.

"The prior system of providing files to the White House relied on good faith and honour. Unfortunately, the FBI and I were victimised. I promise the American people that it will not happen again on my watch," he said in a statement.

The White House also moved quickly, announcing that all background checks had to be approved by the person concerned.

Mr. Freeh said the FBI determined that the White House had requested and received 408 files "without justification" in 1993 and 1994. It had been known previously that the White House obtained confidential FBI files on about 330 people, including a number of prominent Republicans from earlier administrations.

President Bill Clinton Wednesday said he would never condone the compiling of an "enemies list" and he was sorry the White House had obtained the files.

But Republicans, including presidential candidate Bob Dole, compared the incident to the infamous "enemies list" gathered by President Richard Nixon's White House in the early 1970s.

"I hope they don't have mine down there," Sen. Dole told a rally in Savannah, Georgia. "Who knows what this White House will do? How far will they go? ... It's not enough. Mr. President, to give us an apology. We need an investigation."

Of the improperly obtained files, Mr. Freeh said the White House voluntarily surrendered 333 on June 6 and another on June 10.

After a further query from the FBI, it returned 71 more Thursday and one was sent to the Whitewater special prosecutor's office. Mr. Freeh did not account for two other files.

He said the status of an additional 17 White House file requests has yet to be determined. He said the results of the FBI inquiry were being given to Whitewater special prosecutor Kenneth Starr, who is investigating the White House Travel Office affair and other matters.

The controversy about the files surfaced after Republican Representative William Clinger disclosed last week the White House had requested the file of former Travel Office Director Billy Dale seven months after his firing.

Mr. Freeh said the inquiry determined the White House had been "Unquestionably unjustified" in requesting the files on Mr. Dale and Barnaby Brasseaux, another fired Travel Office employee.

He said the former system of providing background files to the White House dated back to Mr. Nixon and Lyndon Johnson and for decades there appeared to be compliance with the law. But the system was vul-

nerable to abuse and Mr. Freeh took some of the blame.

"As FBI director since September of 1993, I am responsible for the FBI problems and shortcomings since then and I fully accept that responsibility. I was not vigilant enough," he said.

Among the steps adopted, White House officials now must use a detailed new request form and must certify the file is being sought for official purposes.

Mr. Freeh said the inquiry, conducted by FBI General Counsel Howard Shapiro, was limited to FBI employees. Because of Mr. Starr's investigation, Mr. Shapiro could not question White House employees about the files.

Meanwhile President Clinton, in a thinly-veiled verbal swipe at Republican challenger Sen. Dole Saturday, accused politicians of parroting the tobacco company line in questioning whether smoking was always addictive.

Mr. Clinton, in his weekly radio address, also took aim at liquor companies, urging them to honour their voluntary ban on broadcast advertising.

The president never mentioned Sen. Dole by name, but clearly was referring to the former senator's remark this week that he did not believe tobacco was addictive for all who used it.

Likewise, Mr. Clinton did not name Seagram's when he criticised "a major company" for the decision to break with tradition and air television ads for whiskey. But he urged the firm to "pull those ads."

On the smoking issue, the president seized upon Sen. Dole's comments to a sympathetic audience in the tobacco-growing state of Kentucky.

In attacking the efforts of the Food and Drug Administration to regulate nicotine as a drug, Sen. Dole said: "For some people, smoking is addictive others, they can take it or leave it. I hope children never start."

Mr. Clinton ridiculed the idea that cigarettes were not necessarily addictive, citing the decade-old conclusion to the contrary of Surgeon General Everett Koop. He also noted that Dr. Koop held his post under Republican President Ronald Reagan.

"So when political leaders parrot the tobacco company line, say cigarettes are not necessarily addictive, and oppose our efforts to keep tobacco away from our children, they continue to cater to powerful interests, but they're not standing up for parents and children," Mr. Clinton said.

The president's reelection campaign Friday released a two-page fact sheet listing \$368,350 that Sen. Dole had accepted from tobacco interests over the past 16 years, either for his various political campaigns or his political action committees.

"Apparently when it comes to Dole's policies, you get what you pay for," scoffed campaign press secretary Joe Lockhart.

Sen. Dole later rejected the criticism, saying there was nothing wrong with accepting legal contributions from tobacco companies.

Mr. Clinton's attacks on tobacco have become a common theme of recent campaign speeches. In an appearance this week in Glendale, California, he said his administration was the first to ask the tobacco industry to accept regulation of advertising aimed at children.

Search for Kashmir hostages to resume if leads emerge

NEW DELHI (AFP) — A joint communication by four Western countries Saturday said an extensive search for four kidnapped tourists in Kashmir had failed but would be resumed if further leads emerged.

"The Kashmir authorities have been conducting an extensive search of the area around Magamrahk village to try and verify the credibility of a report that (the hostages) might have been killed and buried in the area," it said.

"After 10 days of concentrated effort the searchers have found nothing to confirm or contradict the suggestion that the hostages might be dead," said the statement from the governments of Britain, Germany, Norway and the United States.

"The search has been brought to a halt for the time being. It will be resumed if further information comes our way to refine our understanding of what happened to the hostages."

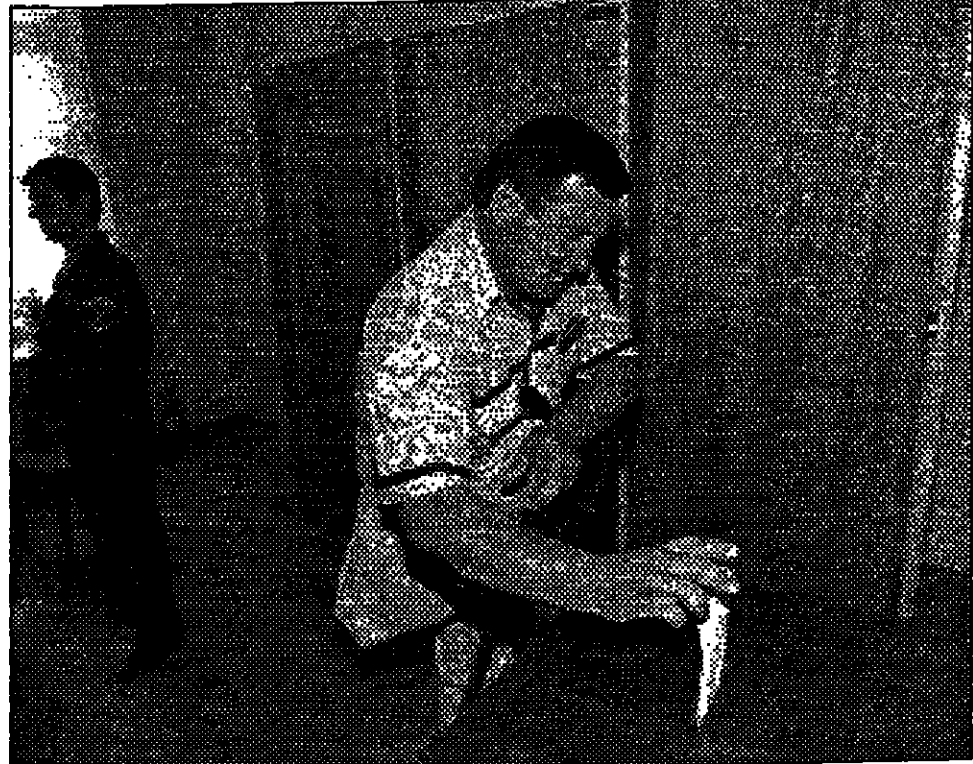
Indian troops aided by law enforcement agents from Britain, Germany and the United States launched the search earlier this month in Magamrahk, some 70 kilometres south of the state winter capital Srinagar.

The agents also used two Alsatian sniffer dogs flown in from Germany.

The search followed a confession by an arrested Muslim militant that the tourists — Britons Paul Wells and Keith Mangan, German Dirk Hasert and American Donald Hutchings — who had been separately abducted by the Al Faran rebel group in July, were killed in Magamrahk on Dec. 19 and buried.

A fifth hostage, Norwegian Hans-Christian Ostro, was beheaded by the Al Faran in the first week of August.

The joint statement appealed for information about the hostages.



Russian President Boris Yeltsin kisses the hand of ballet dancer Galina Stepanenko after she was presented with the title People's Artist of the Russian Federation during a ceremony at the Kremlin Saturday. Mr. Yeltsin handed out a number of decorations to a group of military and civilian personnel for various achievements (Reuter photo)

Low turnout and violence mark voting in Chechenya

GROZNY, Russia (R) — Voting in Chechenya for Russian president and a regional parliament was marked by low turnout and several violent incidents on the second of three days of balloting Saturday, local officials said.

Rebel Chechen forces who have been fighting an 18-month-long war for independence from Russia had vowed to block the voting, which they view as illegal.

"I have to admit there have been a lot of problems with the voting," Yakob Sabirov, the deputy chief of the Chechen Election Commission, told Reuters Saturday.

"Fewer people came to the polls Friday than we expected, partly because the Russian media reported several days ago that elections in Chechenya had been cancelled. We've also had some incidents which frightened people."

Mr. Sabirov, who a few days ago predicted 50 per cent of the Chechen electorate would vote, admitted he now had his doubts.

"We are worried about the turnout. The Russian press didn't help and there have been threats and shooting incidents near polling stations which have put fear into the people," he said.

"We hope people will continue to vote today and tomorrow in every area except around Vedeno, where the separatists are preventing it."

Anecdotal reports gathered by reporters and aid workers indicated that voting was light or non-existent in many areas of Chechenya where the rebels are active.

Chechen authorities reported a bomb exploded at the Motherland Collective Farm on the outskirts of Grozny late Friday in an incident they linked to the elections.

ITAR-TASS news agency said a policeman was killed Friday evening when his car was blown up.

Rebel rocket and small arms attacks were reported in the vicinity of some polling stations Friday, but the pro-Moscow Chechen government provided few details.

"A group of Chechen women opposed to elections entered a polling station in Chernorechie (in Grozny) Saturday morning and stole the ballot boxes," Mr. Sabirov

said. A 55-year-old ethnic Russian school-teacher named Salko who voted in the centre of Grozny Saturday said afterwards she didn't know much about the parliamentary candidates but had cast her presidential ballot for Boris Yeltsin.

"He's put out a lot of propaganda in the last few months which I think has been positive on the issue of Chechenya," she said. "He's made a lot of promises and it would be very ugly of him not to keep them."

Armed guards and a table of pro-Yeltsin literature greeted Ms. Salko as she entered the polling station, along with a sign which read: "Vote or lose" — a slogan used by the Yeltsin camp.

Chechen authorities had information Saturday from only six of 22 voting districts across Chechenya, due to what they said were poor telephone lines.

The highest turnout reported was in Urus-Martani, south of Grozny, where 26 per cent of the electorate voted Friday.

Urus-Martani has steered a neutral course between the rebels and the Russian army and been spared the shelling and bombing which destroyed many towns and villages around Grozny.

One district in Grozny reported a 13 per cent voter turnout Friday but another had only eight per cent.

Officials need a huge vote in Grozny and places like Urus-Martani if they are to meet the 50 per cent target for Chechenya which Mr. Sabirov has set as the threshold for legitimacy.

Many Chechens are boycotting the election as rebel leaders are demanding. Others seem to have given up on the political process altogether.

Musa Tarverniyev, 67, waited in his bombed-out barber shop Saturday morning, hoping a few customers would show up.

"My life's not great. My house burned down in the fighting and I'm just waiting for the next disaster to strike," he said.

"I've been a hairdresser since Stalin's time. I've always been a hairdresser and I always will. My opinion is it doesn't matter much who is in power. The important thing is not to have any more war."

At least 60 die as south India braces for cyclone

HYDERABAD, India (R) — India's south-eastern coast braced for the full force of a powerful tropical cyclone Saturday after torrential rains whipped up by the storm killed at least 60 people.

The cyclone, swirling in the Bay of Bengal, was heading towards the state of Andhra Pradesh where at least 30 people have died in heavy rains with winds of up to 100 kilometres an hour.

Meteorological experts said the storm was expected to strike the south-eastern coast between Machilipatnam and Visakhapatnam towns by Saturday evening.

Strong waves, at least a metre higher than normal, were likely to inundate the low-lying areas of the southern part of Andhra Pradesh which is home to nearly 25 million people, mostly poor farmers and fishermen.

The area, across the subcontinent from Bombay, is prone to cyclones.

Some 10,000 people died in 1977 when tidal waves swept 12 kilometres inland. In 1990, nearly 1,000 were killed when a cyclone with winds of up to 250 kilometres struck the coast.

Among the 31 people killed in Andhra Pradesh so far, 20 were from Madanapally district. They were missing Friday night but the Press Trust of India said they had been washed away.

Seven more people in the state died when lightning struck them.

Despite the deaths weather experts said the latest cyclone might not be as devastating as the killer storms of the past.

"It is merely a rain storm, not a wind storm," P.V. Rama Rao, director of the Meteorological Centre in Andhra Pradesh's capital Hyderabad, told Reuters.

"It has very low potential to cause any extensive damage or devastation," Mr. Rama Rao said. "It may only cause heavy

downpours rather than any destruction."

Mr. Rama Rao said the 1977 and 1990 cyclones both had wind speeds topping 200 kilometres an hour, while the current storm had winds of 80 to 100 kilometres an hour.

"It is an ordinary cyclone, not at all comparable to the ones that hit the Andhra coast in the past such as in 1977 or 1990," he said.

After the 1977 cyclone, authorities built some 500 underground shelters along the coast.

On Saturday officials began evacuating residents of low-lying coastal districts to the shelters. They said thousands might be moved from their homes. Local authorities were ordered to place sandbags along vulnerable coastal embankments.

Police teams armed with medical supplies and rafts were pressed into service.

On Friday a three-storey house in Bangalore, capital of Karnataka state, buckled under the downpour, crushing to death 10 people including two children and injuring 12 others.

Another seven died when a house collapsed under the weight of a fallen tree near Ambah town in the central state of Madhya Pradesh, news agencies said.

Police officials in the southern city of Madras said 22 people were killed in Tamil Nadu state. A family of three including a three-year-old girl were electrocuted when they touched a live wire in Madras, which had 35 centimetres of rain, its most ever on a single day since 1991.

Meteorological officials in Madras said Tamil Nadu was out of danger with the cyclone moving north towards Andhra Pradesh.

Most train services and flights suspended in Madras for the last two days were limping back to normality Saturday.

Moi orders clean-up of Kenya

NAIROBI (AFP) — Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi has ordered a general clean-up of Kenya, particularly the capital Nairobi, to enable it regain its past glory. Speaking at Nairobi's Jomo Kenyatta Airport Friday after returning from Istanbul, Turkey, where he attended the U.N. Habitat II conference, Mr. Arap Moi directed that all national youth service trucks be mobilised to collect piling garbage in the capital from Monday and told the city's mayor John King'ori to ensure the trucks had fuel. At the same time, Mr. Arap Moi appointed with immediate effect a retired army colonel, Franklin Roosevelt Nziga, former Kenyan defence attaché in Britain, to spearhead the clean-up exercise in Nairobi. Mr. Arap Moi warned that Nairobi ran the risk of being afflicted by epidemics such as plague and cholera if urgent measures to clear the ever-mounting garbage in the city were not taken. "I am determined to see that Nairobi regain its past glory," the official Kenya News Agency (KNA) quoted Mr. Arap Moi as saying, adding that as a gateway to the country, the city should shine to reflect Kenya as it should be.

France's Condom puts name to work in museum

TOULOUSE, France (R) — Weary of lame jokes by foreign tourists, the small town of Condom in south-west France put its name to work and unveiled plans for a museum of male contraceptives Friday. "We have decided to channel this amusement, which is occasionally in bad taste, into an educational and scientific project," said the town's mayor and pharmacist Gerard Dubrac. "This museum also offers a tremendous tourist opportunity." The town of 8,000 has for years endured the sniggers of tourists who turn up to have their photographs taken in front of the town's road signs — which are also sometimes pilfered. Historians say the origins of the town's name are obscure. One theory is that it dates from Roman times when it was called either Condane Dum (hilltop) or Condominium (shared property). France's education, cultural and defence ministries as well as an international scientific and medical research committee have pledged support for the museum, which is due to open by the year 2000. Some 1,300 items have already been tracked down for exhibition. Besides original products, the museum will show how condoms were made and sold, and include documents showing the positions adopted by the Roman Catholic Church on contraception.

Butterflies in mass migration

LYON, France (AFP) — An estimated one million bright orange butterflies are making a massive and exceptional migration from the Mediterranean basin to northern Europe, experts said. The "belle dame" insects have been observed in huge numbers through France for the last week, said Jacques Pierre, head of butterfly studies at the Paris Natural History Museum. The butterflies — scientific name *Vanessa Cardui*, and with a wingspan of 4-5 centimetres (nearly two inches) — are heading for countries including Belgium, Denmark and Norway. The insects live for about eight or nine months. They die after laying eggs in northern Europe. Their offspring make the return journey and die around the Mediterranean. It is unclear why they are currently migrating in such large numbers. Unusual weather conditions around the Mediterranean may have led to a larger than average exodus. They fly in small groups at about 50 kmh, and can cover nearly 1,000 kilometres a day.



Habitat meeting concludes

Continued from page 12

But the emphasis placed on local initiatives rather than action driven by national governments sparked concern among developing countries that the level of funding to combat urban woes in the poorer parts of the world would be undermined.

Columbia said on behalf of the "Group of 77" developing countries and China that many hopes on the provision of new resources were not met in Istanbul.

Speakers at the final session urged that the conference's legacy — two documents on urban issues known as the Istanbul Declaration and the Habitat Agenda — would be a framework for action rather than merely pieces of paper.

"We should not leave these two documents on some library shelf to gather dust," Turkish President Suleiman Demirel said in closing remarks read on his behalf.

The Habitat II plan of action calls for everyone to have equal access to credit for shelter and natural resources. It says city dwellers should have access to health care and sufficient food and water and education and urges special attention to groups such as women and the disabled.

Reproductive rights were also referred to in the agenda, but with many reservations placed on it by the Vatican, Catholic and Muslim countries.

Syria massed troops — report

(Continued from page 1)

Reports they were intended for Syrian President Hafez Al Assad.

Last week the British daily Financial Times, quoting senior Arab political sources, said Mr. Assad, who has a summer home in Latakia, was the target of a bomb attack in Damascus.

Diplomatic sources told Al Hayat that Syrian security forces arrested 80 members of the small ethnic Turkmen community, mainly in Latakia, following the blasts.

The daily, quoting observers, said Syrian authorities blamed Turkey for the blasts, describing them as "messages to show that Turkish intelligence services are capable of upsetting Syria's security."

Syria has refused to comment on these developments "because it does not wish to open a front in the north (with Turkey) that would divert its attention from the battle for peace with Israel," a diplomat said.

Diplomats noted, however, that Syria could retaliate by giving the PKK a free hand to carry out cross-border attacks against Turkey.

'Netanyahu avoiding contacts'

(Continued from page 1)

the European Union if Mr. Netanyahu refuses to resume the negotiations.

Israel and the Palestinians are due to resume talks on a final peace settlement, which opened briefly in May before being suspended until after May 29 general elections.

Mr. Arafat stressed that the existing autonomy agreements were signed by the Palestinian Authority "and the Israeli government, not the Labour Party alone," and that Mr. Netanyahu's new right-wing government should respect its commitments.

"These accords with Israel are international accords and the world must assume its responsibilities," he said.

He said he was in constant contact with Damascus and "I will not hesitate to go there when the opportunity arises."

Despite President Hafez Al Assad's distrust of Mr. Arafat and his annoyance at the Palestinians for breaking Arab ranks to sign treaties with Israel, Mr. Arafat said he expects to meet the Syrian leader soon "so life can go back to normal."

Syria's negotiations with Israel have been stalled for several months and, with Mr. Netanyahu saying he will not relinquish the Golan Heights seized from Syria in 1967, there is no sign of an early resumption of talks.

The newspaper said Mr. Arafat admitted that militants — "the Hamas and Islamic Jihad heads" — continue to be a problem. The militants oppose the self-rule accord he signed with Israel in 1993.

He said foreign countries, Iran in particular, "continue to interfere in our internal affairs."

He lauded next week's Arab summit in Cairo to reunite Arab ranks.

Mr. Arafat also denied any involvement in the Israeli election process, rejecting suggestions that Arab Israelis were asked to vote for Shimon Peres, the Labour Party leader who lost the premiership to Mr. Netanyahu.

Netanyahu in coalition scramble

(Continued from page 1)

recently for greater scope for army intervention in Israel's northern neighbour, where the Jewish state occupies a border "security zone."

Mr. Netanyahu's government is likely to be as hardline in policies as it is in make-up.

The government programme, which may be published on Sunday, will champion the concept of "greater Israel" while still pledging to pursue the peace process with its Arab neighbours, aides said.

Israeli newspapers said Friday that the policy document has been toughened from earlier drafts under pressure from the National Religious Party, a far-right orthodox movement with nine seats in parliament and which will get two cabinet posts.

The programme call for expanding Jewish settlement activity and opposes the creation of a Palestinian state, a return of Palestinian refugees to the West Bank and any division of Jerusalem.

It says the government will insist on the Jordan River as its eastern border and refuse to dismantle any Jewish settlements during talks on a final peace settlement with the Palestinians, which opened briefly in May before being suspended until after the elections.

The policy guidelines also rule out a return of the Golan Heights to Syria, the key demand of Damascus in exchange for peace.

Vegetables from air may ease Singapore land woes

By Abdul Jalil Hamid
Reuter

SINGAPORE — "Try this. This is very fresh," Lee Sing Kong urges a visitor as he takes a bite of some newly-harvested butterhead lettuce from a greenhouse.

Thanks to aeroponics, the science of growing plants with roots suspended in mid-air, this lettuce and other temperate and sub-tropical crops can now be grown commercially in tropical Singapore.

"My wife says it was very fresh. She's the gourmet chef, so she would know. I only grow the vegetables," said Mr. Lee, who has experimented with the farming method for five years.

The aeroponic system, which needs no soil, could be the answer for the increasingly urbanised island state's search for high-yield crop production.

"It is not high-tech or low-tech that counts, rather the right tech," Mr. Lee said.

"In Singapore, aeroponics has its advantages simply because of the low water capital and its potential of utilising an otherwise non-cultivable land for cultivation," he said.

Both water and land are scarce commodities in Singapore, and aeroponics uses less water than hydroponics, where plants grow in water instead of soil.

Singapore imports most of its vegetables and water. The island country of three million people consumes 370,000 tonnes of vegetables worth Singapore dollars 260 million (\$185.7 million) a year, according to the Primary Production Department (PPD).

Because land is limited, only 10 per cent of the vegetable supply is produced

locally at traditional and hydroponics farms.

More than 10 years ago, there were 10,000 hectares of farmland in Singapore. Today, there are about 2,000 hectares.

The government, pushing to increase local production to meet at least 20 per cent of the demand, has earmarked aeroponics as a means to help reach the target.

"Aeroponics provides us the means to produce high-value, temperate climate vegetables at reasonable cost that was not possible in our warm tropical climate previously," PPD Director Ngiam Tong Tau said recently.

"Instead of importing high-value vegetables such as lettuce, capsicums, tomatoes and asparagus from temperate countries, we can grow them locally," he said.

Singapore's first aeroponics farm, costing Singapore dollars 10 million, is set to yield its first harvest in June. Production at the 5.6-hectare farm, which uses the technology developed by the Mr. Lee, is expected to hit 120 tonnes by early 1997.

Aeroponics is not new and there have been experiments with it in Israel and the United States, but Mr. Lee says it is best suited to Singapore, where land and water are scarce.

"Growing plants in the air is not new. It was done several years on an experimental basis... In the U.S. and Israel. But to develop that into a technology for large scale production, especially in the tropics, I think there's none," Mr. Lee said.

The aeroponics system Mr. Lee has developed involves planting crops in troughs made of polystyrene foam with their



Lee Sing Kong exhibits the lettuce he grows with the aeroponics technique (Reuter photo)

roots beneath an insulating cover.

Nutrient solution is supplied to the roots in a mist form within the troughs through a pump activated by a light sensor. The frequency of the nutrient spray is regulated by light density.

How long does it take a plant to grow?

"Depending on the crop, for example dresser lettuce, it can be harvested on the system (in) 25-30 days."

Mr. Lee said that "under normal conditions it cannot

grow in the hot tropics, but we have adapted the aeroponics system to create an environment to fool the plants as though they are in the indigenous cool environment."

"How do I do it? I think that is somewhat a trade secret," he said.

"We grow them faster down here. In the temperate climate, the crop cycle for iceberg lettuce from seed to harvest is 100 days. On this system, it takes me 45 to 50 days," Mr. Lee said.

The greenhouse that Mr. Lee built to cultivate his crops comes without air-conditioning or special lighting.

"This is the marvel of it. In the past, when you talked about growing temperate plants in tropical countries, you were talking about creating a temperate house," Mr. Lee said.

"An aeroponic system is practical simply because we found a way that we don't need to cool the area environment. All we need

to do is to modify the root zone, modify the environment within the trough itself.

"When you insulate your trough, the heat gain is much lower. That's why it makes the system cost effective. Furthermore, you can grow 365 days a year."

Looking to the future, Lee said he is experimenting with growing strawberries and thinking of other crops like herbs. There is also the potential of taking the farming method to other countries in the region.

Bosnia elections

Continued from page 12

"We will be looking to President Milosevic to help ensure that these things are achieved in the weeks to come."

Embargo to be lifted

The U.N. Security Council is expected to announce formally the total lifting of the arms embargo against the former Yugoslavia on Tuesday, Western diplomats said Saturday.

The diplomats told AFP the meeting would take place to review a report from U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali who is to transmit a letter from the Swiss government, which currently chairs the OSCE.

The lifting of the embargo is automatic once certain conditions are met, and the diplomats noted that the move would follow Friday's disarmament agreement signed in Florence.

The deal restricts the number of heavy weapons allowed in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and federal Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro),

the effects of such support are not limited to that country alone, but to the region."

In reply to a question, the minister revealed that Jordan asked this week in the talks here for additional U.S. economic assistance so as to "jump start" the country's economy, which he admitted is facing difficulties. He said Jordan will need somewhere between \$200 to \$300 million to do that, an amount he described as "peanuts."

He explained: "Innovative thinking needs to be developed in terms of assistance given to countries in the region where the criteria applied is not bilateral assistance as such, but rather the impact of such assistance, on achieving a regional vision of peace."

Dr. Muasher said Jordan is undergoing "a very successful economic restructuring-programme" aimed at sustainable development and globalisation through "export oriented growth, foreign investment, and privatisation."

But the minister pointed out that Jordanian expectations of "immediate economic improvement" as a result of the peace treaty "have already been largely dampened."

He said Jordanians are still awaiting the implementation of projects "worth hundreds of millions of dollars — money that Jordan does not have and has difficulty obtaining."

Even agreements with Israel on the division of water resources from the Jordan and Yarmouk rivers have yet to be felt, he said.

Instead, he pointed out, the ongoing restructuring programme has meant an increase in the price of energy and water. Here, he cautioned that "the tolerance level among Jordanians today is much lower than it was in 1990" after a "devastating" economic crisis led to the devaluation of the dinar in half and an ensuing restructuring programme was interrupted by the Gulf crisis.

Jordan seeks 'strategic' partnership with U.S.

Continued from page 1

"An economic setback could spell disaster not just for Jordan," he warned, "but also for its model of peace."

On the other hand, the minister revealed that Jordan is due shortly to enter into "a memorandum of understanding" with an unnamed American firm to build a \$2.250 million oil refinery in Aqaba — "the largest foreign investment ever" in Jordan.

In support of his proposal for "a new concept of economic security for the region," Dr. Muasher cited the case of Germany and Israel when the two countries agreed in the 1950s on gradually diverting war reparations paid to Israel to finance development projects.

"This is a perfect, if ironic, example," Dr. Muasher continued, "of how sustaining the security of Israel, and the region as a whole, entails a diversion of some funds given to it the past to countries like Jordan and the Palestinians."

Dr. Muasher complained

that Jordan has not been able to export any goods to the Palestinian areas of the West Bank and Gaza because the Jewish state is reluctant to give up this "captive market" worth over \$1,600 million a year.

In reply to a question on the upcoming Arab summit conference, the minister said that Jordan's approach is that the conference should come up with a "positive" communiqué that would invite Israel to resume the negotiations on the basis agreed upon by all parties — (U.N. resolutions) 242, 338, 425 and land for peace — and stressing the need for the resumption of negotiations on all tracks.

"We feel that the wheel cannot be rolled back," he stressed.

In reply to another question about any signals he expects from the new Israeli government, Dr. Muasher said it was "imperative" that the economic and political situa-

tion in the West Bank be addressed immediately. "We cannot leave the West Bank situation without any political or economic improvement."

Another, he continued, would be on the question of the settlements. He said if Israel were to start a new settlement in the West Bank this would be "disastrous with far reaching implications." He did not elaborate.

He said he was not worried about issues such as Hebron or the Orient House in Jerusalem which serves as a contact place for the Palestine Liberation Organisation with foreign diplomats coming or residing in the Holy City. These are manageable issues, he maintained. The real issues are settlements, negotiations over the final status and Jerusalem.

Dr. Muasher also said that relations between Jordan and Saudi Arabia are "back to track" and all agreements between the two countries prior to the Gulf war have been reactivated.

U.N. teams lift Iraq vigil

(Continued from page 1)

voted a resolution Wednesday calling on Iraq to give immediate access to the UN-SCOM inspectors.

Under U.N. resolutions, Iraq must dismantle programmes for weapons of mass destruction and agree to long-term monitoring before crippling economic sanctions imposed after its invasion of Kuwait can be lifted.

U.N. officials declined all comment on the pullback. They said all questions should be referred to Mr. Ekeus.

Iraq's government-run newspapers blasted UN-SCOM and Mr. Ekeus, but they made no mention of the Security Council demand.

Baghdad says the inspectors include U.N. army officers who seek to spy on Iraq's military.

The U.N. believes that Iraq has not yet complied with Security Council resolutions ordering it to destroy all its

long-range missiles and halt its nuclear, biological and chemical weapons programmes along with the means of producing them.

Iraq must comply with these demands, pay war reparations and account for some 600 people missing since the 1990-91 Gulf crisis before crippling economic sanctions imposed on it for invading Kuwait in 1990 can be lifted.

There have been similar standoffs since the special commission began its work in 1991. Iraq always backed down at the end.

On Friday, Mr. Aziz offered to allow inspections of the targeted sites but not before the United Nations first showed why it suspects that certain sites contain illegal weapons or documents.

Mr. Aziz said he would personally escort Mr. Ekeus and three experts to sensitive sites mentioned in the list. He

offered to allow the five permanent council members and the president of the council to join in the inspections.

Friday's resolution firmly rejected those conditions. Iraq's Al Jumhouria newspaper said Saturday that Mr. Ekeus and his commission were deliberately delaying the lifting of sanctions by not cooperating with Iraq and accused them of heeding what it called false British and U.S. reports on Iraq's weapons programmes.

"Mr. Ekeus always avoided showing his data to permanent members because he knows beforehand that they are lies and that they are politically motivated," Al Jumhouria said.

Other Iraqi newspapers made similar charges against Mr. Ekeus and his commission and praised Mr. Aziz's proposal to end the latest standoff.

Summit seeks to end rifts

(Continued from page 1)

The paper also said that Syria needed Israel's cooperation to achieve peace in the Middle East, but warned that Damascus would never drop its demand for the return of the Israeli-held Golan Heights.

"Syria, from the very beginning, has been showing the best cooperation with all regional and international efforts to make the peace process a success," said Syria Times.

"But Syria cannot alone make peace. She (Syria) needs Israeli cooperation," said the English-language daily.

Mr. Netanyahu, leader of the right-wing Likud Party, has said he would not give back to Syria the Golan Heights, occupied by Israel for nearly 30 years.

He has, however, hinted at a possibly softer approach to the issue and publicly reassured Israel's Arab neigh-

bours that he was committed to achieving peace in the Middle East.

Saturday's Syria Times editorial said it hoped that Mr. Netanyahu would take a "positive" stand for peace but cautioned the Israeli prime minister-elect that Syria would never sign a peace treaty that does not give it back the strategic Heights.

"Syria won't bow to any pressure and her rights are not subject to any bargaining," said the newspaper.

Syrian-Israeli peace talks have been deadlocked for four years over Syria's demand of a full Israeli withdrawal from the strategic Golan. Under the outgoing Labour government led by Shimon Peres, Israel wanted to see the scope of future ties before revealing the extent of any withdrawal.

Sudan-Egypt talks

Sudanese Foreign Minister Ali Osman Mohammad Taha

will meet his Egyptian counterpart Amr Musa in Cairo on Sunday, an official said.

"Mr. Taha is expected in Cairo on Sunday to discuss his country's participation in the Arab summit. He will have meetings with Mr. Musa and Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdul Meguid," the official said.

He refused to indicate what would be discussed at the meeting, but added that Egypt was involved in "intensive talks with several countries" to smooth out tensions between Arab countries.

Mr. Mubarak said Monday Egypt would "rise above" its differences with Sudan for the sake of Arab unity.

Relations between Egypt and Sudan have soured since a failed assassination bid against Mr. Mubarak in Addis Ababa in June 1995.

Cairo has accused the government in Khartoum of being involved in the attack.

Mr. Mubarak last met his Sudanese counterpart Omara Al Beshir at a June 1995 summit of the Organisation of African Unity in Cairo.

Jordan Times

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Unfair practice

THE SENTENCE of a 29-year-old man convicted of murdering his 28-year-old sister was recently reduced from 15 years to seven and a half years imprisonment on the grounds that the convict's family agreed to drop charges against him. Commutation of sentences is a common practice in our court system and is in accordance with existing laws when the aggrieved family of the victim drops personal charges and claims against the perpetrator of the crime. Obviously the court which decided to cut the punishment to half in the case of the brother who killed his sister acted within the confines of the law and there is nothing that anybody can object to under the circumstances of existing criminal legislation. What is objectionable therefore is the law itself which allows for the personal pardon of families of victims to have a bearing on the outcome of criminal cases.

It is common practice worldwide that public interest is the overriding factor in the investigation, prosecution and punishment for crimes whether they are committed within the family or outside of it. Under international norms, victims of crimes are not goods and chattels of their families whose rights can be dispensed with at the discretion of their immediate families. We therefore cannot comprehend how in these contemporary times, the punishment that is normally meted out on a criminal can be reduced to half merely because the "family" decides to forgive and forget. This anomaly in our criminal jurisprudence has got to end and the sooner the better.

What adds insult to injury are the other particularities of the case in question. It turned out that the convict had acted on false information provided by other members of his family who accused the victim of illicit sexual relations and claimed to have tape recordings to back up their allegations. While these very accusations which have set the stage for the commission of a crime against an innocent woman turned out to be unfounded, no action whatsoever was taken by the state against the false accusers. It strikes us as important to "punish" all those who make false accusations and assist in setting the stage for the commission of crimes by bringing them to justice so that the phenomenon may terminate one day soon. So many innocent lives are spent because many of us go around leaking false information on sexual relations between people with malice and aforethought uppermost on our minds. We have got to end this traditional gossip and the commission of "crimes of honour" by adopting new social and legal guidelines on the subject of crime and punishment. We call on our Parliament to act on this urgent subject before more innocent lives are expended on the altar of the infamous crimes of honour.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE COMING summit meeting in Cairo will not frighten Israel nor will it force the new leaders of the Jewish state to change their stand, and the Arab leaders will most probably dwell on the peace process and announce their commitment to a durable peace, said a writer for Al Ra'i daily Saturday. Israel will not be affected by an Arab summit decision to freeze Arab countries' normalisation process with Israel or to maintain the Arab boycott of Israel, said Fahed Al Fanek. He said Jordan and Egypt have taken a clear and firm decision that they are committed to the strategy of peace and will not go back on its path. Therefore, Israel's only concern is a revival of the intifada, starting from Hebron, and suicide bombings inside Israel, as well as continued Hizbollah resistance activity on Israel's northern border, added the writer. Furthermore, Israel will remain concerned about Washington's stand and the pressure which could be exercised on it by the United States which is sponsoring the peace process and will also be concerned over the prospect of hostile European countries' stand should the Likud-led government show intransigence as to the implementation of the peace accord, said to the writer.

A WRITER for Al Ra'i daily hailed the Saudi-Jordanian agreement to expand the trade and economic relations between them as opening a vast avenue for future cooperation in all fields. Sultan Al Hattab said that the agreement, which the two sides concluded Thursday, will not only erase any lingering elements that marred the brotherly relations between Riyadh and Amman following the Gulf crisis, it will also pave the ground for a new foundation of strong ties based on mutual respect. Saudi Arabia does not serve only as a market for Jordanian products which will be exempted from restrictions and customs barriers it rather serves as the Kingdom's strategic depth and is a supporter of Jordan's endeavours to attain development and achieve a comprehensive peace in the Middle East, according to the writer. He said Saudi Arabia wields great influence in the Gulf region and its accords with Jordan will no doubt have a positive impact on Jordanian-Gulf countries at large.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

'Peace is a strategic option; Israel is only one of them'

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

AT THE conference "Jordan economy in its regional and international framework" organised on May 26-29, 1996, by the New Jordan Centre for Studies in cooperation with Friedrich Ebert Foundation, a paper was presented by Ibrahim Badran tackling "Jordan's economy in the future of the Middle East".

The author of that paper is an authority on the subject of economy under peace. He is an economist, an energy expert, a researcher, and acted as coordinator of the peace process in the Jordanian team to peace negotiations. We have therefore every right to expect a clear picture of the present situation of the Jordanian economy and the prospects of its future.

However, Dr. Badran presented in his paper some facts and impressions which left the audience, including myself, rather confused, perhaps because the subject is too complicated to be covered fully in a short paper.

The introduction of the paper was about the weakness, crisis, and set-back of the Jordanian economy in the period 1985-1991. That state of affairs was presented as a background for the peace process, as if the author were suggesting that Jordan was pushed to accept peace as a way out of its economic difficulties. If peace were only a response to an economic crisis, one might be justified to think that the Jordanian economy was intentionally led to the crisis to facilitate its involvement in the peace process and put down the expected resistance. This fits perfectly the conspiracy theory.

The researcher pointed out the reasons behind the economic set-back, including the first Gulf war (1980-1988) and the Lebanese civil strife (1975-1991). I believe that the Jordanian economy was on the benefiting side from both wars.

He also stated that the Jordanian government was obliged to devalue the dinar by around 50 per cent in 1988. The fact is that the government was strongly against devaluation. However, the devaluation finally imposed itself by

sheer market forces when the Central Bank closed its foreign exchange window in mid-October 1988 after using the last dollar in its treasury in defence of the overvalued dinar.

The researcher, being a government official, was not in a position to mention the factors behind the economic crisis of 1988/1989, such as mismanagement of the national economy for 15 years, from 1973 to 1988, the indulgence in internal and external borrowing beyond the capacity of the country to service, and, of course, corruption.

In his paper, Dr. Badran ventured to use grand titles, which are very difficult to justify in a short paper, such as: "The overall political dimension of peace era," "The overall administrative dimension of peace era," "The regional changes..." etc. Under each of these titles, he presented his ideas, sometimes in the form of facts and figures, and sometimes in the form of impressions or value judgements on what should happen.

In many instances, the author embarked on certain assertions which he took for granted although they are controversial. He stated that: "The new Middle East, which all parties try hard to build, is an economic, social, cultural and human structure..." etc. In reality, the new Middle East is not more than a dream, a baby of Shimon Peres alone. The Arab side was not impressed, and the project is not taken seriously even in Israel itself, and was not before and after the defeat of the dreamer.

In this respect, and after 17 years since the signing of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty and two years of Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, it is high time we cease to think that peace or putting an end to the state of war will alter the political map of the region and radically change the life of its people.

The Arab-Israeli conflict was by and large a conflict on paper, 99 per cent of the time. Likewise, the Arab-Israeli peace is also a peace on paper. It did not end a war that did not exist, and hardly changed anything on the ground. We,

in Jordan, do not feel there is anything substantially new in our daily lives resulting from the peace we achieved with Israel, at least not yet.

Finally, I would like to dwell a little bit on the core of Dr. Badran's paper under the title: "Scenarios of the future." The author suggests three alternative eventualities: The first is the scenario of extremism; he means both the Islamic extremism and the Zionist extremism and violence. The second is the scenario of hegemony, whereby Israel would impose economic control because its economy is ten times larger than both the Jordanian and Palestinian economies combined. In this respect, the author treated the size and the strength or competitiveness of a national economy as if they were the same. The third is the scenario of equality, where the mutual respect and fair dealings are the rules of the game.

It is only natural for the weak party to choose the scenario of equality. The author did not fail to do so. The problem is that real and practical factors impose themselves. If Israel has the means to impose its hegemony over others, it will not refrain from doing so out of good neighbourly behaviour. If it is able to act violently and practise its extremism and get away with it, no one can convince its leaders to moderate their behaviour.

Under such circumstances, it is not in our best interest to call for a "New Middle East" which could not be expected under Israeli-imposed leadership or, for that matter, contemplate the form of a Benelux which is deprived of equality and condemned to hegemony, especially when we have another option, namely the Mediterranean partnership with the Europeans.

Peace is a strategic option. Our national interest lies in peace. Peace means normal relations with Israel. It is not necessary that our peace with Israel develop into a love affair and marriage relationship. In this world there are many countries to interact with. Israel is only one of them.

Great expectations of the same kind

By Dr. Samir Mutawi

JUDGING BY objective criteria, efforts to regenerate common Arab hopes, based on the recently announced call for an Arab summit, to be held in Cairo on June 21, may turn out to be a futile exercise.

It is ironic that only the election into office of Likud Prime Minister-elect Benjamin Netanyahu, viewed by those Arab leaders meeting in Damascus last week as a dangerous development, warranted a prompt and urgent call for the summit.

What seemed to be a call out of context only days before is particularly relevant at the present moment when Arab attention is turned to the prospects and potential of joint Arab action which could become an attainable objective once again.

Thanks to the Israeli electorate and the ominous new reality of a Likud-led government in Israel, six years of inter-Arab fighting and political fragmentation, following what came to be known as "Gulf-war two", for all intents and purposes should now be over. The

mere indication of a possible return to the summit concept as a method of uniting the Arabs against their "common enemy" caused a great deal of unrealistic euphoria at the Arab street level.

Indeed, while this manifestation of Arab solidarity seems to attract so much attention and enthusiasm from the common man, many public opinion leaders express cautious scepticism.

Why euphoria at one end of the social spectrum and scepticism at the other? It is a truly pressing question requiring an answer that goes beyond the superficial statements filling newspaper pages every morning. Not that Arab summits are seen, even by Arab masses, as a cure for all ills or as a waste of Arab leaders' time by the sceptics.

Having served as a proper and institutional expression of Arab order for nearly three decades, summits are no longer perceived by many as the practical vehicle for joint Arab action. The sceptics significantly invite us to consider the two main political orientations to be debated by Arab hard-

liners, on the one hand, and Arab moderates backed by those who would not care, less on the other.

Jordan, Egypt, the Palestine National Authority, representing the Palestinian people, and probably some Gulf states will support moderation and calls to give the newly elected Israeli leader time and the benefit of the doubt until they become realistically aware of his government's policy programme.

The peace process, according to the leaders of those states, is worth every effort to make it work and succeed. Damascus, on the other hand, according to news headlines quoting authoritative Syrian media organs, would like the summit to adopt a tough stand vis-à-vis Israeli hardliners led by Netanyahu.

With tough intransigent election slogans on the part of Netanyahu, his Likud Party and other fanatical national religious parties, all representing potential new cabinet coalition partners, Syria's call and political platform may be considered as appropriate and timely at this truly historic juncture.

The uncompromising "nos" preached by the Israeli right well before the election campaign began with regard to such vital issues as the establishment of a Palestinian state, Jerusalem, Israeli settlement in the West Bank, withdrawal from the Golan Heights etc., deserve a tough, unyielding Arab position.

Having shown the world, the American sponsor and other major powers, such as the Europeans, for example, that Arab adherence to peace cannot be doubted, we are now unable to retreat from our earlier commitments, no matter how high the stakes are at present. To do so, even by way of making noise in media columns, would provide Israeli international media sympathisers with the excuse to turn the table on all the good will we have generated or positive results we have achieved.

We know of course, and the Israelis also know, that Syrian leaders oppose every aspect of what Jordan and the PLO have achieved in terms of peace accords or agreements with Israel. These achievements, never-

theless, have to be viewed in historical perspective and their potential contribution to the ultimate objective of comprehensive peace rather than futile opposition to rhetorical platforms. This, it must be stressed, in no way means submission to ideological phenomena or rigid political style of any Israeli party.

A respected Jordanian peace partner, as perceived by most Israelis, including, and especially, a Likud-led government, may avail its good offices, and be well-comed in this capacity. Clear indications to recognising this newly emerging factor are now being made by the Palestinian and Egyptian leaderships, for example, and are truly welcomed by Jordan. An Arab recognition and utilisation of the same will go a long way towards preempting Israeli intransigence and inflexibility.

Forty six years of conflict and humiliating wars that ended in defeat, or near-defeat in 1973, should be enough to convince us that diplomacy, if well conceived and supported by the Arab Nation, could achieve

what might otherwise seem unachievable as the case may look now.

Naturally, prediction is highly undesirable at this point in time, but sceptics are bound to make a cynical attempt. Considering the two opposing political stands expected to surface in the forthcoming Arab summit, expectations might even be blown to pieces by stubborn and unrealistic political demands.

There is little reason to hope for the best as this cannot be expected with a history of fragmentation and name-calling previous allies. Nevertheless, and to avoid taking a pessimistic view of joint-Arab action, let us hope for the best.

Dr. Mutawi is working as a media consultant in Amman and London. He worked as a media advisor at the Royal Court and also as a producer with the BBC Radio and Television. He is the author of the book "Jordan in the 1967 war". He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

In Russia, bombs could also decide election's outcome

By Gwynne Dyer

"I AM SURE it was done to stop the election going ahead.... It is directed against the president and me," said Moscow's mayor Yuri Luzhkov after a bomb exploded on the Moscow metro on June 11. But he did not look very surprised.

Luzhkov's brilliant feat of deduction narrows the list of suspects down to the Communists, the nationalists, the Chechens, other national minorities, disgruntled elements of the military — and, of course, President Boris Yeltsin's own people acting as agents provocateurs. Say 15 or 20 million people with both the motive and the opportunity.

It has been clear for some time that the Russian presidential election was vulnerable to the same manipulation by terrorism that recently turned the tide in the Israeli election. And as incumbent Boris Yeltsin, written off six months ago as too ill and too drunk to try again, has steadily closed the gap with his chief rival, Communist candidate Gennady Zyuganov, the likelihood of bombs has grown.

That does not mean that the Communists are behind it. Indeed, at this point they probably are not, if only because they have a healthy disrespect

for Russian opinion polls and suspect that their man will lead Mr. Yeltsin handily in the first round of voting Sunday. (Russians' fear of the authorities make them tell opinion pollsters what they think the government wants to hear, so Yeltsin's apparent lead may be illusory.)

This first round of voting does not matter much anyway. Yeltsin and Zyuganov are bound to emerge as the two leading candidates who go through to the runoff election in mid-July, but neither is close to winning an absolute majority that would obviate the need for a second round.

It is not even clear that it would be to Yeltsin's advantage to emerge as the leader in this round. He might actually attract more votes from the candidates who will be eliminated this time if he looks like an underdog, for his whole campaign is built on running against the Communist menace. He is so profoundly unpopular that few people outside his immediate family would vote for him if he were not seen as the best chance of stopping the Communists.

So what are the bombs meant to accomplish? Not just the bomb on the metro, but the other bomb that injured Yuri Luzhkov's running mate in the Moscow mayoral election, Valery Shantsev, on June

7, and the five remote-controlled bombs that were detonated in the path of the convoy carrying Chechen rebels home from peace negotiations in southern Russia, injuring seven people, on June 11?

Back to first principles. Russia is a democracy, and with any luck it will remain one. But almost all

tined trade regardless of petty details like which ideology or doctrine happens to be in force when they reach maturity. Many of Russia's ex-Communists are now sincere democrats. Many others, like Boris Yeltsin, are insincere ones who defer to the popular demand for democracy — which is

with or without his knowledge, because they believe that a heightened sense of insecurity will drive people to vote for the status quo. The ultra-nationalists, anti-Semitic, right-wing crazies might have planted them, in the belief that uncertainty will create a demand for a strong man like Vladimir Zhirinovskiy.

People in Zyuganov's entourage might have set the bombs, thinking that a sense of chaos and danger would increase their man's electoral chances. Dissident Chechen rebels, opposed to new leader Yeltsin, might have done it. Or any combination of the above, or none of the above. Russia is a democracy, but most of its leaders are not democrats and neither are many of their followers.

Can the bombers swing the election against Yeltsin, the incumbent and expected victor in Russia, as they did against Peres in Israel? Not unless they create more horror: 59 people were killed in Israel, as opposed to only four so far in Russia (which has 30 times the population). And not unless they do it when it really counts, within a couple of weeks of the runoff election next month. But they presumably understand those basic facts.

"Yeltsin might actually attract more votes from the candidates who will be eliminated this time if he looks like an underdog, for his whole campaign is built on running against the Communist menace."

its leading politicians, or all parties, are ex-Communists.

What else would one expect after 75 years of Communist-monopolised politics in Russia? Politics, like the law, the military and organised religion, is a trade that attracts certain personality types, and most of the same people will end up in their predes-

quite real, despite all the disillusionment with the past decade of bungled economic reforms. But all these men (for they are overwhelmingly male) have been raised in the utterly amoral tradition of Communist tactics. In Marxism, the end has always justified the means.

So Yeltsin's people might have planted the bombs,

This past week's bombs do not matter much (except to the victims). But a week from now we will be heading into the real election, which will determine who rules Russia (still the world's second-greatest military power, if much diminished) for the next half-decade. And then the bombs will really matter.

There will almost certainly be more bombs, and bigger ones. And while all the suspects may contribute to the mayhem, the Chechens will probably provide the biggest ones. Yeltsin is the man who launched the genocidal war against them, and some of them do not care that the Communists might prove an even more implacable enemy.

In theory, that should not mean that Russian voters will follow the Israeli example, for they live in a much safer part of the world and none of their neighbours question their right to exist. Moreover, to suffer the same scale of casualties that Israel took in February-March, they would have to lose 1,800 dead to terrorist bombs in the next month.

But every bomb fills the screen, so the numbers are largely irrelevant. Boris Yeltsin, like Shimon Peres, is now a hostage of the bombers.

World News

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Russia at crossroads on eve of presidential polls

MOSCOW (R) — Russia stood at a crossroads Saturday on the eve of an election in which it chooses to back more painful reform under President Boris Yeltsin or take a leap into the unknown by voting for his Communist rival.

With electioneering banned Saturday, a hush fell over the airwaves and mass media after a strident four-month campaign in which Yeltsin and Communist leader Gennady Zyuganov have slugged it out for the votes of the 105 million-strong electorate.

The two men, front-runners in a field of 10 presidential candidates, wound up their campaigns Friday with Mr. Yeltsin appealing to Russians to unite behind him and Mr. Zyuganov rebutting charges that he would roll back democracy.

"We must be together. Together we will win," the 65-year-old Kremlin leader told 15,000 ecstatic fans at a rock concert in his home town of Yekaterinburg.

He later told reporters in the Urals city that if reelected for four more years he would make major changes to his government and his Kremlin team to give new impetus to reform.

Mr. Zyuganov, 51, who has played a key role in rebuilding the Communist Party after its disgrace five years ago, promised in a St. Petersburg television interview that he would guarantee freedom of speech and political activity.

He said he expected the next government to be a coalition and offered a compromise to his rivals, saying he was ready for dialogue with Mr. Yeltsin and the present government of Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin.

Mr. Yeltsin, first president of newly-independent Russia who was elected in June 1991 on a wave of anti-Communist fervor, has worked hard to rekindle the huge popularity he once enjoyed.

But Mr. Zyuganov, though far less charismatic a figure, has ruthlessly exploited resentment among millions who have been driven to the poverty line in Mr. Yeltsin's brash new Russia.

The final outcome of the election, only five years after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of cold war, could have implications for global policy and East-West relations.

Despite Mr. Zyuganov's assurances that he will not turn back the clock, Western leaders have made little secret of their desire to see Mr. Yeltsin re-elected.

Many fear instability on the world stage if Communists regain control of a country which still has a large arsenal of nuclear arms.

An army of about 1,100 foreign observers fanned out across the federation but they face a difficult task in watching out for irregularities at any of the 93,000 polling stations.

Voting has already started in some remote areas of the sprawling country and in Chechnya, where separatist rebels threatened to disrupt polling.

First unofficial results were expected soon after polls closed in the Western enclave of Kaliningrad at 1900 GMT Sunday and preliminary results from all of Russia were likely to be announced late Monday.

Pollsters predict that neither Mr. Yeltsin nor Mr. Zyuganov will win outright in the first round and will face each other in a runoff in July.

The final outcome could then be decided by political deals with the eight other candidates. These include ultranationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, liberal economist Grigory Yavlinsky and law-and-order General Alexander Lebed.

Mr. Zyuganov, candidate of a leftist bloc of National-Patriotic Forces, says he will embark on policies to boost domestic production, restore dignity to all Russians and end conflict in Chechnya.

But his critics say his policies remain imprecise and a future with Mr. Zyuganov in the Kremlin would be fraught with uncertainty.

Mr. Yeltsin has played on people's memories of Communist repression of the Soviet era and warned Russians starkly that a Mr. Zyuganov victory could lead to civil war.

Russian newspapers, barred by law from electioneering in the last 24 hours, resorted to hints and insinuations to get their message across Saturday.

Pravda, mouthpiece of the Communist Party, printed letters from pensioners who said they could not afford to eat properly and a letter from writer Alexander Zinoviyev denying that the election was a straight choice between communism and democracy.

The government newspaper Rossiyskaya Gazeta published a photograph of a young man nailing together the roof of a house — clearly evoking the electoral symbol of the pro-government Our Home Is Russia bloc.

And Izvestia, tucked away in the bottom of its front page, printed a story headlined The Last Emigration of Ilyich.

It was about a passenger steamer called Ilyich — but the loaded allusion would not be lost on Russian readers who would know that revolutionary leader Vladimir Lenin's middle name was Ilyich.

President Yeltsin, who has made denunciation of Communist dictatorship a theme of his election campaign, gave top awards Saturday to two intellectuals who exposed Soviet-era repression.

Mr. Yeltsin presented a state prize to film director Nikita Mikhalkov, who won an Oscar last year for his film *Burnt By The Sun* about the impact of Stalinism on a Bolshevik colonel.

He also honoured sculptor Ernst Neizvestny whose memorial to the millions who died in Stalin's labour camps was unveiled this week in the city of Magadan — a staging point for numerous "gulag" camps in the Soviet Far East.

Pakistan denies scrapping Mirage purchase plan

ISLAMABAD (R) — The Pakistani government denied local newspaper reports Saturday that it had scrapped a plan to buy French Mirage 2000-5 fighters because of what an air force spokesman called prohibitive costs.

Two dailies — the English-language The Nation and the Urdu-language Naw-i-Waqt — said Saturday a decision to cancel the plan was taken at a meeting between President Farooq Leghari and army chief General Jehangir Karamat Wednesday.

A presidential palace spokesman, quoted by the official APP news agency, denied the report, calling it just "speculative."

The agency quoted him as saying "all decisions about

such matters are taken at the appropriate forum of the government as laid down in the rules of business."

The statement seemed to imply that such decisions must be taken by Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's government rather than by the president, who is head of state, and the army chief.

Earlier, an air force spokesman could not confirm the deal cancellation report, but he described as "prohibitive" the cost of the Mirages, seen as an alternative to U.S. F-16s whose sale was blocked by Washington in 1990 due to suspicions over Pakistan's nuclear programme.

Ms. Bhutto had said Monday that Pakistan was still far from clinching the Mirage deal.



Western Europe's 87th Ariane rocket on its launching pad at European Space Agency (ESA) centre in Kourou, French Guiana, on the northeast coast of South America (Renter photo)

1st Euro rocket launched since Ariane-5 failure

KOUROU, French Guiana (R) — Western Europe's 87th Ariane rocket placed a satellite for Intelsat into orbit after a launch from French Guiana Saturday — the first launch since the failure 11 days ago of its new Ariane-5 rocket.

The Saturday mission used a flight-proven Ariane 44P rocket and it was the 17th straight success for an Ariane-4 which has failed only three times in 59 launches.

"It's the 87th Ariane launch. In terms of general concept, design and inflight qualification Ariane-4 is reliable," Terry Edwards Intelsat launch manager told Reuters.

The rocket blasted off into a clear equatorial night sky at 3:55 a.m. (0655 GMT) and placed into orbit 21 minutes later the Intelsat 709 satellite for the Washington-based International Telecommunications Satellite Organisation (Intelsat).

Designed to service the Atlantic Ocean region, Intelsat said the satellite will have the capacity to transmit three TV channels and 90,000 simultaneous telephone circuits.

The 709 is the ninth and last in a series built by California based Space Systems/Loral for Intelsat. It weighs 3.4 tonnes (7,500 lbs) and is expected to operate in space for 15 years.

The insured value of the mission — launch, satellite and insurance — was \$182 million.

The more powerful Ariane-5, carrying an uninsured scientific satellite payload worth \$500 million, was blown up less than 40 seconds into flight on June 4 at the European Space Agency (ESA) launch centre in Kourou, French Guiana on the northeast coast of South America.

The spectacular failure broadcast live on French television recalled the 1986 mid-air explosion of the U.S. space shuttle Challenger, in which seven astronauts died.

It was a major setback for ESA, which has invested over \$8 billion in the programme and hopes Ariane-5 will maintain Western Europe's edge in launching heavy satellites well into the next century and lead to manned space flights later.

A preliminary investigation pointed the finger at faulty computer software and electronic components, but ESA later said a defect in the rocket's positioning system may have been the cause.

Aid agency still battles North Korea famine

YANJI, China (R) — The Red Cross warned Saturday of outbreaks of measles and diarrhoea among North Korean children, malnourished after the worst floods in a century devastated crops last year.

In this Chinese border town, officials said truckloads of flour were crossing into North Korea irregularly, hampered by the inability of North Korean purchasers to afford more.

"We are trying to avert a famine," Geoff Dennis, newly assigned representative to North Korea of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) said by telephone from Pyongyang.

"If we can get the basic rice to people and make sure some vegetables are available, then people will stay alive," he said. "But their situation won't improve."

"It's going to be a bad few months," he said.

Aid agencies were trying to feed about 500,000 people left vulnerable after the worst floods in a century devastated large parts of the hermit Stalinist state and destroyed crops last year.

The IFRC was responsible for helping 130,000 of those and was providing each with 450 grammes (15 ounces) of rice a day — or three small bowls, Mr. Dennis said.

The dietary problems could lead to outbreaks of measles and diarrhoea among children while the elderly were handing their

limited rations to the young, increasing their vulnerability to disease, he said.

"That's the first thing, but it could start a cycle of disease," Mr. Dennis warned.

Appeals for international aid had raised about 2.7 million Swiss francs — only 35 per cent of what the IFRC estimates is needed to ensure enough food until North Korean farmers can reap their harvest, delayed by bad weather, in October, he said.

Chinese companies have been sending truckloads of flour across the narrow Tumen Bridge on the border between Jilin province and North Korea, local officials said in Yanji.

However, although the size of exports had increased in recent months it was limited by shipping North Korean exports of goods used for barter, they said.

A Chinese preference for cash coupled with a shortage of funds in North Korea was further limiting sales, they said.

"Even if they want more flour, we can't just give it to them, they have to pay for it," said one local official.

Hunger was widespread in North Korean rural communities, ethnic Korean residents of the Yanbian border region said.

"The situation over there is very hard, many people are terribly hungry," said one former North Korean who moved to China in 1995.

Bomb rocks U.K. city; 50 hurt

MANCHESTER, England (R) — A car bomb rocked the city of Manchester in northern England Saturday and police said 50 people had been injured.

Firefighters were battling blazes caused by the city-centre blast and a spokesman said some people had been trapped near the scene.

"Damage to buildings exceeded the area that we had evacuated. We are talking about a very large device," a police spokesman said.

Local radio quoted ambulance officers as saying there had been a second explosion. Further details were not immediately available.

Police said the car bomb detonated as bomb squad officers were checking a suspect vehicle following a coded warning about an hour earlier. There were no fatalities reported.

It was unclear who was responsible for the bomb but one unconfirmed report said the warning had carried an IRA codeword.

The blast went off just five days after the start of landmark talks on Northern Ireland in Belfast from which the IRA's political wing Sinn Fein has been excluded because of the guerrillas' refusal to reinstate a ceasefire.

The IRA has planted five bombs in London since ending a 17-month ceasefire in February, citing British intransigence over Northern Ireland. The last attack was on April 24 when two bombs failed to explode under London's Hammersmith Bridge.

Manchester's busy Arndale Shopping Centre had been evacuated before Saturday's blast, which shattered windows over a large area and could be heard up to three kilometres away.

Eyewitnesses said black smoke was billowing up over the city centre.

A spokesman for Manchester Royal Infirmary said the hospital was dealing with 40 casualties, most of them suffering from cuts. None so far was seriously injured.

"The place was rattling and everything. I don't live in the centre but I can see people going past me going home crying," one person told a local radio station.

Police with loudhailers were telling people to stay out of the city centre and cordoned off a large area. They were checking another suspect package which it was feared might contain a second device.

"As far as we are aware there have been no fatalities, but because of the size of the blast, a large number of people have been seriously injured and others have been injured by flying glass," a police spokesman said.

Manchester, Britain's second largest city, is currently teeming with soccer fans in town for the European Championships.

Russia and Germany play a match at the city's Old Trafford stadium Sunday.

Hospitals and emergency services went on to major alert.

Suu Kyi assails Burmese junta restrictions

RANGOON (AFP) — Opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi Saturday assailed the ruling junta's latest "restrictions" on democracy as she called for the people to play a greater role in politics.

Addressing an estimated 4,000 people outside her compound, she said her National League for Democracy (NLD) had sent an official letter to the junta on its latest law effectively banning such meetings.

Authorities again ignored the weekly gathering, although the official press continued to fan public sentiment against Aung San Suu Kyi.

In an open letter published Saturday in the state-run Mirror daily, neighbours of the pro-democracy leader complained of the "unruly" weekend meetings outside her compound and asked authorities to put a stop to them.

The neighbours said they were subjected to abuse whenever they tried to enter or leave their private compounds during the meetings, and they complained of property damage as well as the stench of urine left behind by participants.

Aung San Suu Kyi shrugged off the press campaign, telling supporters Saturday: "Smear campaigns against us do not encourage national reconciliation."

She continued to stress the need for national reconciliation, and was cautious in her remarks on a new law adopted by Burma's military rulers last week providing for heavy penalties against participants in unlawful gatherings.

"The NLD regards the law as being prohibitive and has told the authorities that it would be detrimental to national reconciliation if it is either misused or misinterpreted," Aung San Suu Kyi said.

Western nations, key party signal help for Hasina

DHAKA (R) — Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh's centrist Awami League moved closer Saturday to forming a government as a potential ally signalled support and Western nations welcomed her showing in parliamentary polls.

The wife of jailed ex-President General Hossain Mohammad Ershad, the man seen as pivotal in a hung parliament, said his centre-right Jatiya Party would honour the results which gave the Awami League a simple majority.

Roushan Ershad told Reuters she would meet her husband in prison soon to seek his views for a political agreement, which party officials say is linked to support for his efforts to seek release or parole in corruption cases.

"This culture of political vendetta must cease. Rival parties must learn to make peace," she said. "I personally believe we should do what would help the country to overcome a political crisis."

It was a subtle barb at Mrs. Hasina's arch-foe, former Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), who alleged widespread rigging in Wednesday's elections. International observers certified the polls as free and fair.

Western nations and Japan showed they backed the verdict in the peaceful elections, which came as a relief to a nation plagued by long spells of army rule and bloody political violence since its independence from Pakistan in 1971.

"Ambassadors of the United States, Japan, Italy, France and Netherlands and the high commissioners of Britain and Australia met Mrs. Hasina for a courtesy call at 8 p.m. (Friday)," the Awami League said in a statement received by Reuters Saturday.

The Russian ambassador met her earlier in the day.

The Awami League had 133 of the 271 results in from 300 contested seats and the BNP 104. But Mrs. Khaleda refused to accept defeat or recognise the results as fair, and left room for protests or joining the prime ministerial race.

Partial re-polling is scheduled for next Wednesday in 27 constituencies hit by violence. A fresh re-count has been ordered in two.

Meanwhile freed former Bangladesh army chief, Lieutenant General Abu Saleh Mohammad Nasim, got off lightly after being charged with treason over a failed military revolt, defence sources said Saturday.

"At the moment we have casualties popping up all over the place because of the nature of the damage. There is extensive damage to the area and many of the casualties appear to have laceration wounds," an ambulance spokesman told reporters.

Eyewitnesses reported panic breaking out. "I heard a bang and I just saw people crying," said one man.

"People were running and there was screaming," said a woman in a store nearby.

Meanwhile Gerry Adams, president of Sinn Fein, said the IRA's political wing remained firmly set on peace after the car bomb rocked Manchester Saturday.

"Whatever the cause of this morning's incident in Manchester, Sinn Fein's focus remains firmly fixed on the need to restore the peace process and we will not be deflected from that task," Mr. Adams said.

Prime Minister John Major Saturday blamed the IRA for the bomb.

"This explosion looks like the work of the IRA," Mr. Major said in a statement issued by his office.

Calling the attack a "callous act of terrorism," Mr. Major added: It is the work of a few fanatics and, as (Irish Prime Minister) John Bruton has made clear, causes absolute revulsion in Ireland as it does here.

Mr. Major demanded that Sinn Fein put pressure on its guerrilla allies to reinstate a ceasefire. Sinn Fein is barred from talks on the future of Northern Ireland until the IRA does so.

"Sinn Fein have been clamouring to attend the Northern Ireland peace talks, which began last week," Mr. Major said.

"If they are really serious about wanting peace, they must condemn this act and demand an unequivocal IRA ceasefire now. We shall spare no effort to bring those responsible to justice."

In a separate development, the IRA said Saturday that its members had shot dead a policeman in an attempted mail van robbery in Ireland last week.

But in a statement to Irish state television and radio RTE, the Irish Republican Army said the shooting was "not authorised" by the leadership and was "in direct contravention of its orders."

The IRA had earlier denied responsibility for the killing, which caused public outrage in Ireland because it was the first murder of a police officer on duty there in more than a decade.

Saturday's statement by the guerrillas said that individual members were "party" to what had happened. But it said the action was not sanctioned by the leadership.

The Irish policeman who was killed was escorting a Post Office van carrying £100,000 (\$153,400) in the Irish village of Adare Friday last week. His police partner was seriously injured.

"We are all for it if it is interpreted in the right way, ... but if it is deliberately misused against us, it will in no way be conducive to peace and stability," she said.

She gave no details of a letter the NLD has sent to Burmese authorities on the issue.

Aung San Suu Kyi held that genuine democracy could be established only if steps were taken to encourage the people to take part in politics.

"In this regard, the NLD feels that present restrictions should be gradually reduced and concrete steps taken leading towards democracy," she said.

The ruling junta, officially known as the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), detained more than 260 NLD supporters ahead of a planned party congress in late May.

Many have since been released, but state television has carried interviews with some NLD candidates who won seats in the 1990 general elections but who now said they had decided to give up politics for personal or health reasons.

About one dozen candidates are believed to have resigned so far, and the number is generally expected to rise.

In Bangkok, meanwhile, special envoys of U.S. President Bill Clinton warned Saturday that Burma could be a "disruptive influence" if allowed to join ASEAN or other regional groupings before the junta and the opposition succeed in a dialogue.

The envoys, dispatched for consultations with key allies after Burma's military rulers moved against the NLD supporters, also suggested the United States could take unspecified action if the situation in Burma deteriorated.




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Tripoli is the cheapest city in the world

LONDON (AFP) — Most western European capitals have become cheaper to live in over the past six months, but remain the world's most expensive locations after Japan's three main cities, a survey published here showed.

The Russian capital Moscow, meanwhile, has leapt ahead in the table of 121 cities across the globe compiled twice a year by the London-based Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).

It is now the tenth most expensive city, compared with 25th place six months ago, due to inflation of 78 per cent, and an expatriate will now spend more money living in Moscow, than in any German city, Hong Kong or Singapore.

A fall in the value of European currencies, resulting from a slowdown in economic growth and low interest rates, has cut the cost of living in many cities in western Europe.

But the top 20 is still dominated by Europe and the Far East.

Zurich, the most costly city in Europe, behind it Oslo and Geneva, and Paris and Vienna, have all become cheaper.

But Stockholm has bucked the trend, with the cost of living now much higher after the Swedish currency appreciated against the U.S. dollar. The city has jumped to seventh place, shared with Vienna, from 18th six months ago. The Italian cities of Rome

and Milan are also exceptions, as the lira strengthened.

Rome is no longer Europe's cheapest city, having overtaken Lisbon in the rankings, to 44th place. The Portuguese capital is in 49th position.

London remains one of the least expensive western European capitals, in 29th place, and Tel Aviv has now jumped ahead of it.

New York, the most costly city in the United States, remained at 36th place. Libreville, the capital of Gabon, shares tenth place with Moscow, and is by far the most expensive African city.

Harare in Zimbabwe and Nairobi are the cheapest places in Africa, at 117th

and 115th places respectively, while Johannesburg is in 102nd place.

Tokyo, Osaka and Kobe are still the world's most expensive cities for expatriates, although the yen's depreciation against the U.S. dollar has reduced the cost of living there.

Hong Kong has become a little more costly, moving from 17th to 12th place.

The Iranian capital Tehran, for its part, surrendered the status of the cheapest city in the world to Tripoli in Libya.

The EIU survey compares a basket of 140 goods and services, including food, alcohol, household supplies, transport, clothes and utility bills. Housing costs are not taken into account.

Terms agreed for Syria to move towards EU association

LUXEMBOURG (R) — The European Union (EU) has put another piece of its Mediterranean free trade jigsaw in place when it agreed terms for Syria to move towards EU association.

An association agreement promises lucrative business and economic incentives and is crucial for the 15-nation bloc's ambition to create a "Euromed" free trade zone.

"Syria is some way off (association), but we are moving in the right direction," said an EU official. "It is important that we keep our potential partners interested."

Last week, Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq Al Shara signed a cooperation agreement with the EU — not a particularly substantive document, but the first step towards association.

EU diplomats face a myriad of challenges in negotiating Syria's association. While they have some admiration for its laissez faire economy, Syria's human rights record fails almost every test.

"The economy is in pretty good shape considering its isolation," an official said. "The structure and goodwill is in place (for association) but politically..."

The European Commission, which negotiates trade and political agreements on behalf of the EU, will have a hard time convincing the European Parliament that Syrian President Hafez Al Assad can ever be persuaded to relinquish his iron grip on the country.

The European Parliament increasingly opposes using trade deals as an incentive for a country to improve its human rights records. It only approved recent association agreements with Morocco and Turkey after resolutions calling for closer monitoring of human rights were included.

Italian Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini, speaking for the EU presidency at a news conference, said Syria was making progress on diversifying its economy. While the economy was still dependent on oil or oil products, Syria had greatly

improved its banking, electricity and tourism sectors.

Mr. Dini noted that 60 per cent of Syria's gross national product came from the private sector and an even greater percentage of exports was privately generated.

Manuel Marin, the European commissioner with special responsibility for Mediterranean relations, told a news conference with the Syrian foreign minister that Syria was moving "slowly but surely" on the right track.

But Syria and the EU had reached a "critical point" in determining their mutual future. "Relations have been difficult, but some difficulties have been ironed out," he added.

Mr. Shara said Syria was committed to establishing good trade and political relations with the EU. "At the height of Arab dominance in culture and technology, we shared our knowledge," he said. "And so now we hope that Europe will share its current supremacy in these matters."

GCC states approve draft investment law

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab Gulf states have approved a draft law that will bridge the gap in their investment rules and attract foreign capital needed for their attempts to ease reliance on oil, officials have said.

Delegates from the economy and commerce ministries in the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) approved the unified law at talks in Riyadh and would put it forward to their ministers for final endorsement.

"The law was approved and it will be presented to the industry ministers this year for final approval. It is intended to attract investment to member states to support their economies and diversify their sources of income," an official from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) economy ministry said.

The new rules, which have been under discussion for more than a year, will remove disparities in investment regulations in the six member states concerning incentives, and terms related to ownership and taxation.

Under the rules, priority

would be given to foreign investment that will help member states expand their non-oil industries and acquire technology.

"This new law is intended to lure foreign investment, narrow the gap between incentives, facilities and exemptions offered to foreign investors, achieve fair distribution of these investments and ensure economic integration between member states," the Riyadh-based GCC secretariat said in May.

"Priority will be given to projects that will help GCC countries in lessening reliance on imports, expanding their productive base, ensuring training for nationals, and increasing their non-oil exports," it added.

GCC states — Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait and the UAE — have launched a drive to lure foreign capital in a bid to acquire technology, which they see as essential for economic diversification.

The situation is in contrast with that during oil boom of late 1970s and early 1980s, when Gulf states were

among the biggest capital exporters in the world because of their huge financial surpluses.

The investment drive is part of overall reforms designed to revive their economies which have sharply slowed down because of weak crude prices. Their total income has also plunged to less than half its level in the early 1980s as crude exports provide more than 80 per cent of their revenues.

The gap in their investment laws and restrictions on foreign ownership in projects have scared off would-be investors from other countries.

According to the Doha-based Gulf Organisation for Industrial Consulting (GOIC), GCC states received only \$344 million of the total world investment of around \$222 billion in 1994.

The 1994 figure compares to around \$409 million in 1993 and an average \$1.87 billion per year between 1983 and 1988, said the GOIC, which advises on non-oil industrial policies in the 15-year-old Gulf alliance.

It showed foreign capital in the GCC's industrial sector accounted for nearly 21 per cent of the total industrial investment of around \$50 billion. Although it has sharply expanded over the past decade, the sector has remained confined to light industries, GOIC said.

Japan, the United States and other industrial giants have repeatedly urged GCC nations to improve their investment laws and ease curbs on foreign partnership to encourage the inflow of industrial technology.

"The new investment law empowers authorities to exempt some foreign enterprises from the minimum 51 per cent local partnership."

Project owners could also be provided with cheap energy and raw materials," the GCC said.

It said exemptions also covered income taxes and other duties for five years, which could be extended in some cases. The law also includes exemption from tariffs on imports of equipment and other materials for the project.

Britain to lose top-seven economic ranking—report

LONDON (AFP) — Britain will lose its place as one of the seven biggest world economies in the next 20 years and its place in international organisations will be reduced, the Financial Times has reported.

The paper quoted a leaked treasury document which said Britain's role in organisations such as the Group of Seven leading industrialised nations, the International Monetary Fund, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and the World Trade Organisation, will

"change as we move down the ranking".

The document, drawn up by officials to help the treasury remodel itself for the next century, said the fast-growing economies "will demand greater political power" in these organisations. It argues for the treasury to draw up plans to reform them in such a way that Britain can "retain

influence in the future".

The report predicted that "if recent growth trends continue," China would become the "single largest nation" according to the Financial Times. While the United States, Japan and Germany would remain in the top seven, France and Britain would slip into the second division, the document concluded.

Iran's carpet exports fall 40 per cent

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran's carpet exports dropped 40 per cent in the year up to March compared to the same period last year, an Iranian official has said.

Hossein Arzari, the government-appointed head of

Iran's handicraft industry, said exports had dropped to \$986 million compared to \$1.7 billion between March 1994 and March 1995.

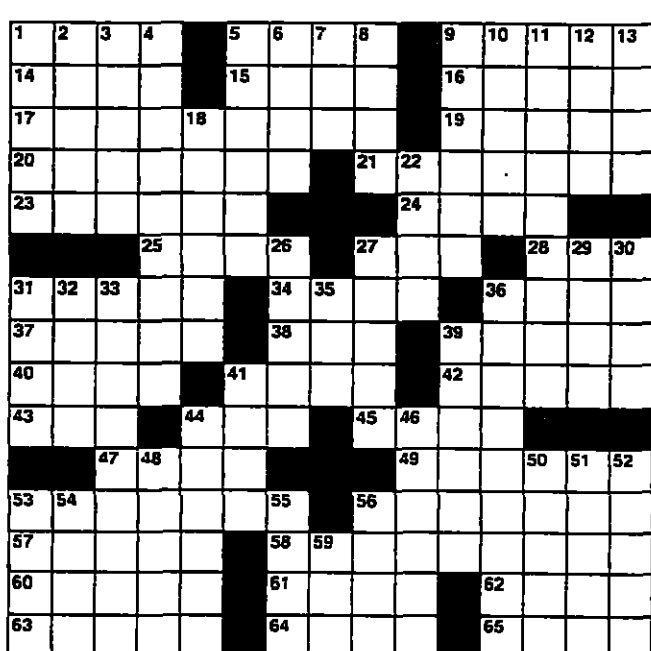
Speaking to Iran's official IRNA news agency, he did not specify what had caused

the fall but called for export policies to be "corrected and improved."

The government imposed regulations last May requiring exporters to bring back to Iran all foreign earnings in hard currency.

THE Daily Crossword by William Canine

- ACROSS
- Skedaddle
 - Catfight
 - Lethargy
 - Aperture
 - Swamp philosopher?
 - Beef cut
 - Kind of bet
 - Hayley opus
 - Crystal of "Wings"
 - Type of onion
 - Cerify
 - Pitcher
 - Charon's river
 - Be a quidnunc
 - Paddle
 - Out-of-date
 - Spanish nver
 - Spy
 - Fall bloomer
 - Fish eggs
 - "The Odd Couple" playwright
 - Roman coins
 - Cunning
 - Result
 - West
 - Certain
 - boatman, briefly
 - Scrutinize
 - Spirit
 - Titan's mate
 - True-like period
 - Cancellation
 - Highway
 - So Am. region
 - Bondman
 - Elvis, to some
 - Cal's-paw
 - Leverets
 - Tricks
 - Boleyn



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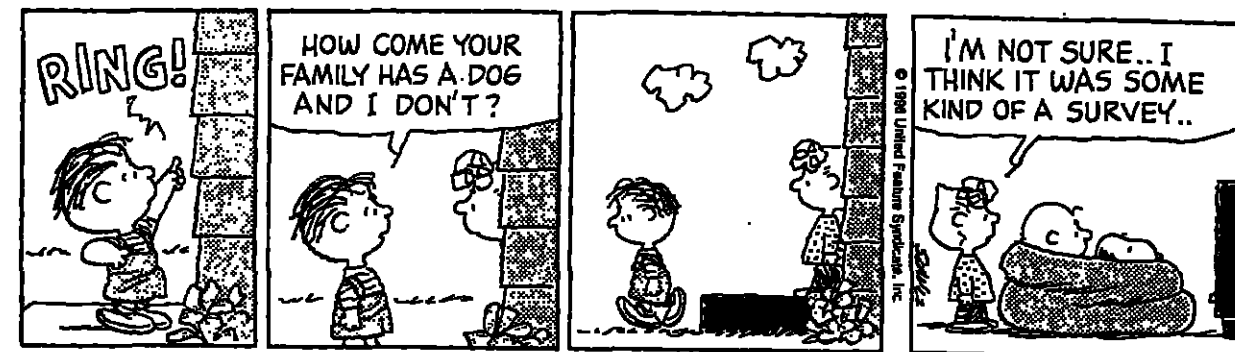
DOWN

- Home of Biblical queen
- Hanker after
- On the ball
- Williams
- Flashy
- Duck's milieu
- Mature
- Balls and dolls
- Like grain stalks
- Old French coin
- Sporting venues
- Aware of
- Pause
- Conquer
- Leander's love
- Copy
- Victimizes
- Baseball family name
- Director Clair
- Areca
- Site of Bhutan
- "Desire"
- Caddy
- Fals
- Sailor's gear
- Basin
- Film festival site
- Reef builders
- Liberty
- Continue
- Constellation
- Greasy of
- Football
- Spring
- Name in jazz singing
- Monumental work
- English school
- Commotion

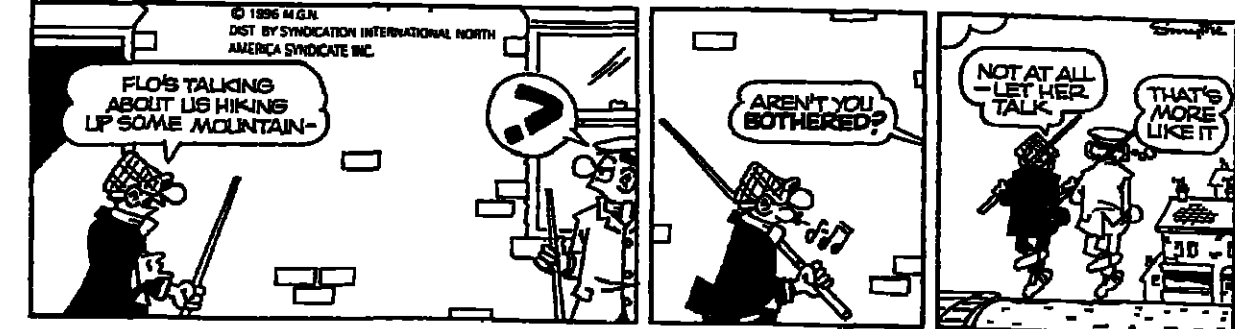
THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



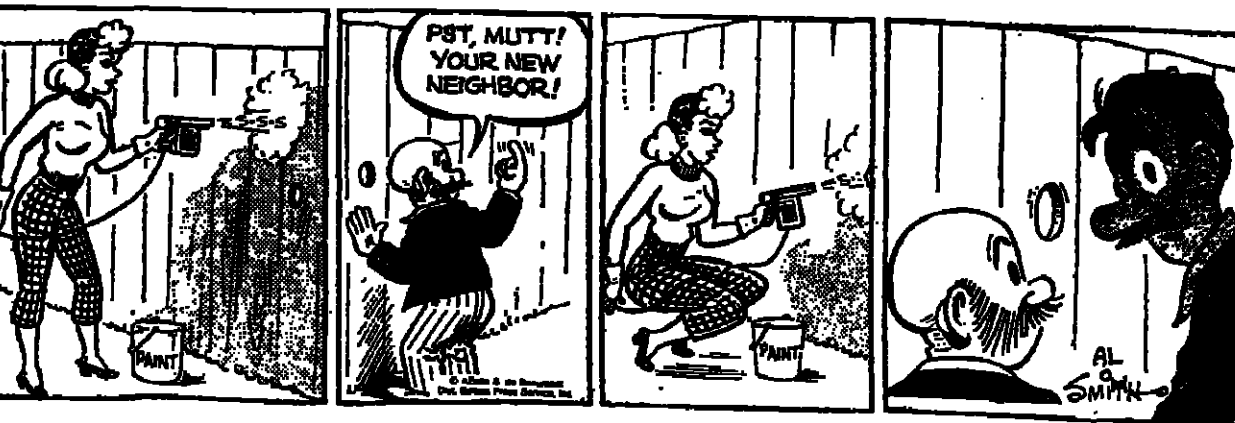
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR SUNDAY JUNE 16, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Get old interests completed today instead of getting into new ones at present. Tonight you can relax at home with your mate and loved ones and have a wonderful time being in the company of those who you are truly fond of.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 21) Know what your true aims are in life today and don't do anything which can jeopardize your present security or you will find that there will be great difficulty in your residence and through your career activities.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Don't permit an irate fellow associate to spoil your day's activities today, however, you can see this person later tonight after a cooling-off period and get to the point where cool heads will prevail.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Don't let any changes which are coming up today in connection with your career activities upset you. They lead to greater success in whatever projects or tasks which you have present in the days ahead.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You have some business to attend to today, even if it is Sunday, so stick to your schedule instead of running off for pleasure with close friends and loved ones. You will be able to gain much success by this evening.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Exit early today and avoid the tense situation at home which could be present and meet with fellow associates to gain greater rapport for the days ahead. Later this evening you will be able to concentrate upon the feeling of loved ones.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You have important career activities to handle today, so don't run off on some silly unrelated tasks with a close friend who wants you to do just that. You have the opportunity to meet with a bigwig and have great success.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Plan how to make the most of your finest abilities today and forget dull chores for a while. Try not to spend too much money at this time or you could find yourself with many expenses and not enough income to handle them all.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Endeavour to please your loved ones more today, so transfer personal wishes to the background at this time. Later this evening you will have the opportunity to meet with close friends and have some fun out on the town.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to Jan. 20) Get into the world of activity today and accomplish a good deal of a personal nature and forget that secret concern you have which your loved ones can sense and you do not wish to discuss with them at this time.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Plan how to gain more prosperity in the days ahead and don't be so gregarious today. You need financial advice from an expert to handle any business ventures you are involved in at this time to get the answers.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Forget all those changes you want to make in business and pursue personal desires today. Retire early tonight, since you will have many career activities to be dealt with in the days ahead and you need your rest.

Birthstone of June: Emerald — Citrine

Sonics win Game 5, play Bulls in Chicago tonight

SEATTLE (AFP) — Three days earlier, they seemed as overwhelming as Mike Tyson in his boxing prime. Now the Chicago Bulls seem more like Greg Norman falling apart in the final round of the Masters. And the winningest club in National Basketball Association history suddenly has a fight on its hands in order to win a fourth title in six years.

Seattle defeated the Bulls 89-78 here Friday, cutting the Bulls' lead in the best-of-seven championship series to 3-2 after losing the first three games. Game Six is Sunday in Chicago. "Well, we got a series now," Bulls' coach Phil Jackson said.

No NBA club has ever rallied from a 3-0 hole to win the finals. No team down 3-2 has ever won twice on the road to take the title. The Bulls, who won a record 72 games this season, losing only twice in 49 home games.

Gary Payton, Hersey Hawkins and Shawn Kemp all sparked to help the Sonics stave off elimination for the second game in a row after losing the first three games of the series, which heads back to Chicago for Games 6 and if necessary 7.

"We were determined," said Hawkins. "We played too doggone hard to let them celebrate on our floor."

"I think tonight's game was the biggest test we've ever had as a basketball team and we've had a lot of them this season," said Seattle coach George Karl. "Our men showed up and it was a great privilege to be a part of what went down out there."

Payton, the NBA defensive player of the year, got a lot of help from his friends in keeping Jordan under control and had a team-high 23 points along with nine rebounds and six assists.

"We just had to go in there and be positive and play the game all-out," said Payton.

Payton was Jordan's main defender the first three quarters, but Hawkins assumed primary duties in the fourth, and finished with 21 points and five rebounds of his own.

"He's a scrappy guy," Jordan said of Hawkins. "I think he was the difference for them."

"I thought Gary was running out of gas so I decided to play hawk on Jordan the



Chicago Bulls forward Dennis Rodman (right) reaches out as Seattle SuperSonics forward Shawn Kemp tries to go to the boards in the second quarter of Game 5 in the NBA finals in Seattle, June 14 (Reuters photo)

fourth quarter," said Karl. Jordan finished with a game-high 26 points but just nine in the second half.

The Sonics swarmed at Jordan, no matter who was assigned to him. "He's been seeing a lot of crowds and that why he's not so effective," said Payton.

When the Sonics double-teamed him, Jordan said, "I had to move the ball around and trust my teammates to make the shot, and they had a tough time shooting the ball today."

Kemp added 22 points, 10

rebounds and five assists for Seattle. It was the first game either team had three players with 20 points or more this series.

"I don't think anybody can guard him right now," said Payton of Kemp.

Unlike Payton, Jordan got little help from his friends. Scottie Pippen was next highest scorer on the team with just 14 points after shooting 5-for-20.

"Scottie didn't find the rhythm of his shots again tonight," said Chicago coach Phil Jackson. He was

n't alone, as the Bulls had their second lowest points total of the season.

Toni Kukoc was only 5-for-13 and 2-for-5 from three-point land for 11 points and Steve Kerr was 2-for-8 — 1-for-7 from long range — for seven points. The Bulls shot just 3-for-26 from three-point range.

Overall, the Bulls shot 38 percent, and without Jordan's 11-for-22 were only 18-for-55 — 33 percent. Seattle shot 42 percent in a tightly defended game throughout.

Edberg and Becker shine, Muster struggles through

LONDON (R) — Swede Stefan Edberg's resurgence in his final year on the tennis tour gathered momentum Friday when he joined Boris Becker, Thomas Muster and Wayne Ferreira in the semifinals of the London grass court tournament.

The 30-year-old Edberg, who won this event at Queen's Club in 1991, marched into his first tournament semifinal of the year with a 5-7 6-4 6-2 quarter-final win over American sixth seed Todd Martin.

He will face clay-court specialist and top seed Muster for a place in Sunday's final.

World number two Muster, 28, had to come off the ropes to beat Mark Woodforde 1-6 7-5 6-3 in their quarter-final, with the Australian then claiming Muster had called him a "faggot" during the match.

"He was yelling faggot to me, he was saying it throughout the match. I don't take too kindly to that," Woodforde complained later. "It's just Thomas Muster, he tries whatever he can to win."

Muster denied the claim. "If he's got something to say he should come to me," he said. "I don't remember anything I might have said to him."

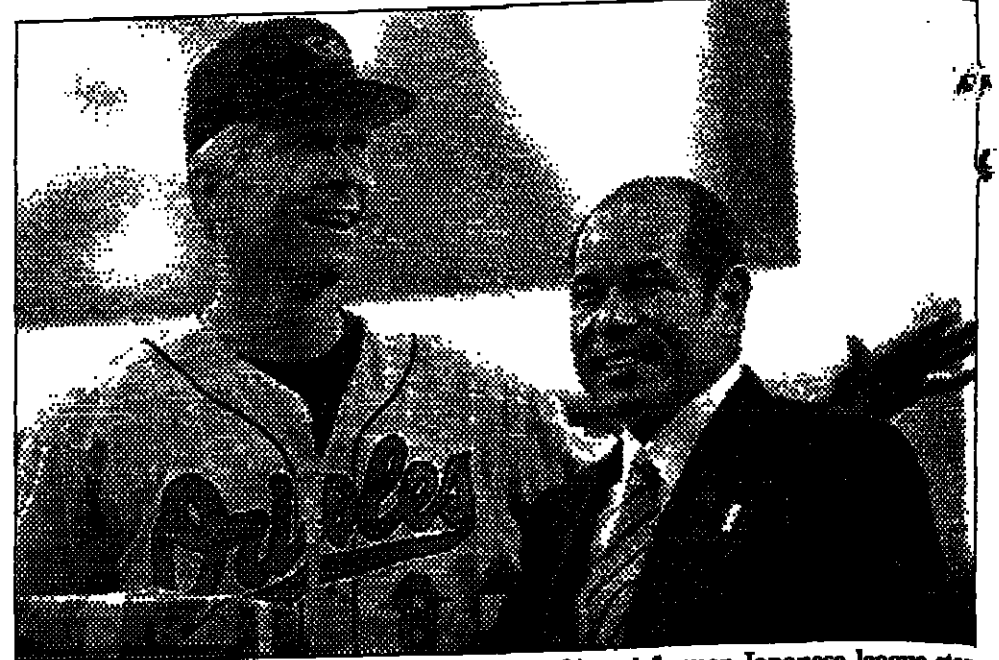
Becker, ranked fourth in the world and the champion in 1985, 1987 and 1988, showed he was striking form at the right time in the run-in to Wimbledon with a 7-5 6-4 win over Australian Patrick Rafter.

In the semifinal he will meet South African Ferreira, the fourth seed and winner in 1992, who beat another German, Michael Stich, 6-7 6-3 7-6.

Stich, still coming to terms with his defeat in the French Open final last weekend, was within a point of going 5-1 up in the last set but then squandered his grip on the match.

Edberg, playing his ninth quarter-final in 12 appearances at the tournament, dropped the first set with a double fault but then picked up the tempo against Martin, the 1994 champion.

Despite treatment for a sore back in the second set, the Swede broke twice in the third to notch an impressive win.



Baltimore Orioles shortstop Cal Ripken Jr. (left) and former Japanese league star Sachio Kinugasa greet each other prior to Ripken's 2,216th game, in Kansas City June 14. (Reuters photo)

Ripken sets another world mark

KANSAS CITY (R) — Baltimore Orioles shortstop Cal Ripken played in his 2,216th consecutive game Friday in a 6-1 victory over the Kansas City Royals, surpassing former Japanese player Sachio Kinugasa's world mark for consecutive games played.

Ripken tied the record Thursday set by the Japanese legend, who played in 2,215 consecutive games from October 19th, 1970 to October 22nd, 1987 with the Hiroshima Carp of the Japanese Central League.

Ripken and Kinugasa exchanged gifts in a pre-game ceremony at home plate and Kinugasa throw out the ceremonial first pitch to Ripken. The crowd gave Ripken a two-minute standing ovation and he came out for two curtain calls. "With the outcome of the game in our favour, it makes everything a little special," said Ripken, who went 0-for-4.

"It was a lot like last September 6th when we were able to win. Unless you've been lucky enough to go through that, you don't understand the embarrassment of it. It's a little overwhelming at times, I don't know how to react."

"With the nice video and signs, it brought up some of the same emotions as last September. It was very heartwarming how I was received tonight. I don't have any secrets, I think this record will be broken someday. If I can do it, somebody else can."

The 35-year-old Ripken captivated a nation last year as he chased Lou Gehrig's seemingly unbreakable record of 2,130 games, finally surpassing the New York Yankees' legend on September 6th in front of a sellout crowd at Camden Yards.

Ripken is hitting .275 with 12 homers and 48 RBI in 62 games this season and he has picked up his offensive production ever since Baltimore manager Davey Johnson considered moving him to third base last month. Kinugasa played third base throughout his career.

A 270 lifetime hitter with 504 career home runs, he was inducted into the Japanese baseball hall of fame five months ago. Kinugasa holds central league records for most seasons played, at-bats, hit by pitches and hit into double plays.

Kinugasa retired in 1987 and is now a baseball analyst and a guest lecturer at Hiroshima University in Japan.

In his streak, Kinugasa batted .274 with 446 home runs and 1,278 RBI. The regular season in Japan is 130 games, 32 less than the major leagues.

Heading into tonight's game, Ripken has batted .278 with 339 home runs and 1,315 RBI in the 2,215 consecutive games he has played.

Orioles beat Royals, Brewers trounce A's

KANSAS CITY (R) — Mike Mussina pitched a seven-hitter for his second complete game of the season and Brady Anderson hit a two-run homer in the eighth inning as the Baltimore Orioles defeated the Kansas City Royals 6-1 Friday.

"He just pitched a great ballgame," Orioles manager Davey Johnson said. "This came at a time when we certainly needed it."

Baltimore shortstop Cal Ripken, who went 0-for-4, played in his 2,216th consecutive game, surpassing Japanese player Sachio Kinugasa's world mark for consecutive games played. Kinugasa was at the game and threw out the first pitch to Ripken (see separate story above).

In New York, Dwight Gooden allowed a pair of runs in eight innings on the way to his third straight win and Derek Jeter broke a sixth-inning tie with a two-run single as the New York Yankees held off the Cleveland Indians 4-3.

In Boston, Mo Vaughn hit a solo homer to snap an eighth-inning tie as the Boston Red Sox defeated the Texas Rangers 4-3 for their fourth consecutive victory.

With the score tied at 3-3, Vaughn belted a 2-2 pitch from Rangers starter Bobby Witt (6-5) over the left-center field wall for the go-ahead run. It was Vaughn's 23rd homer.

Jose Canseco hit his 20th home run. In Milwaukee, Greg Vaughn hit a three-run homer and Ricky Bones allowed six hits over seven-plus innings as the Milwaukee Brewers continued their dominance of the Oakland Athletics with a 6-2 victory.

Vaughn's 14th homer came in the fourth inning and erased a 2-0 deficit for the Brewers. In Minnesota, Tony Clark homered to snap a sixth-inning tie and Chris Gomez and Chad Curtis each drove in runs in the frame as the Detroit Tigers held off the Minnesota Twins 5-4.

At California, Randy Velarde missed the cycle by a triple and Garret Anderson doubled twice and drove in a pair of runs to pace the California Angels to their sixth straight win, a 7-4 victory over the Toronto Blue Jays.

In Seattle, Wilson Alvarez allowed five hits in 7-1/3 innings and Lyle Mouton drove in two runs as the Chicago White Sox snapped a two-game losing streak with a 4-1 victory over the Seattle Mariners.

Braves beat Dodgers

John Smoltz allowed five hits over eight scoreless innings to become the first 13-game winner in the majors, and Ryan Klesko and Dwight Smith hit solo homers to lead the Atlanta Braves to a 3-1 victory over the Los Angeles Dodgers Friday.

In Chicago, Steve Trachsel allowed five hits over 7-1/3 innings and Sammy Sosa hit his league-leading 22nd homer and scored twice to lift the Chicago Cubs to a 5-1 victory over the San Diego Padres, who have lost eight straight games.

Trachsel (5-4) struck out four and walked one. In Cincinnati, Pedro Martinez pitched a four-hitter with a career-high 11 strikeouts and Moises Alou homered and drove in two runs as the Montreal Expos cruised to their third straight victory, a 6-1 rain-delayed win over the Cincinnati Reds.

In Pittsburgh, Jeff King's two-run single in the ninth inning plated the tying and winning runs as the Pittsburgh Pirates rallied from a four-run deficit to defeat the Florida Marlins 5-4.

In St. Louis, Gary Gaetti hit two home runs, including a grand slam, and Ron Gant ignited a four-run first inning with a leadoff homer as the St. Louis Cardinals routed the New York Mets 13-4.

Gant, hitting atop the batting order for the first time this season, hit his 10th career lead-off home run to give the Cardinals a 1-0 lead. It was the seventh homer of the year for Gant who was taken off the disabled list earlier Friday.

At Colorado, Trenidad Hubbard's RBI double broke a tie and started a four-run sixth inning that vaulted the Colorado Rockies to their fourth straight win, a 10-6 victory over the Philadelphia Phillies.

Eric Young went 1-for-4 to extend his hitting streak to 13 games for Colorado. Young is batting .511 on the streak.

In San Francisco, Jeff Bagwell tied a major-league record with four doubles and Craig Biggio homered and drove in three runs as the Houston Astros snapped a three-game losing streak with a 9-1 rout of the San Francisco Giants.

Bagwell doubled in the first, fifth and seventh innings and added a run-scoring double in Houston's three-run ninth.

The last player to have four doubles in a game was Cincinnati's Billy Hatcher in 1990.

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Drummond impressive in U.S Olympic trials

ATLANTA (R) — Flamboyant Jon Drummond put the pressure on America's veteran sprint corps with a pair of superb 100-metre runs Friday at the U.S. Olympic trials.

The 27-year-old Drummond equalled his lifetime best of 9.99 seconds in the first round, then clocked 10.00 seconds in beating world record-holder Leroy Burrell and eight times Olympic champion Carl Lewis in a talent-loaded quarterfinal.

Olympians Dennis Mitchell and Michael Marsh also advanced to Saturday's semifinals. Mitchell won his quarterfinal in 10.08 seconds, and Marsh was second to Jeff Williams in 10.07 in their race.

"I don't think today was indicative of how things will go tomorrow," said the 34-year-old Lewis, aiming Saturday to become one of America's three 100-metre competitors in the Atlanta Olympics.

World champion Gwen Torrence and 1992 Olympic gold medalist Gail Devers were joined by recent collegiate champion D'andre Hill in posting times of 10.99 seconds in the speedy quarterfinals of the women's 100 metres.

Devers was even faster in the first round, clocking 10.96 seconds to edge Chryste Gaines, who had the same time.

The day was not as comfortable for heptathlon world record holder Jackie Joyner-Kersey. She twisted her left ankle while high jumping and led Dedee Nathan by only 69 points after four events. She also had noticeable problems in the 200 metres, but held on to win in 24.27 seconds, more than a second slower than her world record.

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Classy Croatia aim to improve against champions

SHEPHERD (R) — Talented but injury-hit Croatia are looking for a vastly improved performance against holders Denmark in a Euro 96 Group D match Sunday.

Their disjointed performance in the 1-0 win over Turkey Tuesday means that so far they are seen as one of the competition's under-achievers. "It can only get better," admitted coach Miroslav Blazevic.

At least Croatia have three points in the bag, unlike Denmark who could only draw 1-1 with Portugal on Sunday and were saved from defeat by goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel.

The pressure on both sides increased when Portugal beat Turkey 1-0 Friday and Denmark coach Richard Moeller Nielsen is expected to make changes.

Striker Mikkel Beck was not impressive against Portugal and may lose his place to surprise inclusion Soeren Andersen, capped only three times.

Andersen had not expected to even make the squad for the tournament and had to cancel a holiday to take part. It could be a

good omen for Denmark — nearly all their players were on holiday when they received the late call to replace Yugoslavia in 1992 and went on to lift the trophy.

Veteran midfielder Kim Vilfort may also gain a place after missing the game against Portugal.

"They have some experienced players but we always go for a win, it's the only way we know how to play," said Moeller Nielsen. "Others can go for a point but I think that's too dangerous."

Of Croatia's performance against Turkey, he said "maybe that's their strategy. They bided their time and waited for their opportunity. That shows the team is experienced and clever."

Croatia's injury list includes playmaker Zvonimir Boban and strikers Alen Boksic and Marc Stumac, although all three are considered to have a chance of playing.

Goran Vlaovic, who came on to score the spectacular winner against Turkey, stands by.

Sacchi has no regrets about team changes

LIVERPOOL (R) — Italy coach Arrigo Sacchi has no regrets about the controversial changes to his team, despite Friday's 2-1 Euro 96 loss to the Czech Republic.

"I would do the same again whether we had won or lost," said Sacchi, who made five changes in the starting line-up from the side which beat Russia 2-1 on Tuesday.

"We tried to play those players who were in the best condition on the night. The important thing is to make the right choices," said Sacchi who is known, and often criticised at home, for ringing the changes in his side.

Enrico Chiesa, who started instead of Pierluigi Casaragi, scorer of both goals against Russia, justified Sacchi's choice with his 18th-minute equaliser against the Czechs.

But he missed several other chances and was substituted by Gianfranco Zola in the 77th minute.

Sacchi blamed the whole team for defeat and said they disintegrated after the sending-off of defender Luigi Apolloni in the 29th minute for collecting a second yellow card for a tackle from behind on Pavel Kuka.

"After our equaliser the team started playing a slow game, they weren't pressing and they weren't fast. The passing was sterile," Sacchi said.

"Then things got more complicated with the sending-off of Apolloni and they got into tactical disorder on the pitch. At this level you cannot concede that sort of advantage to the opposi-



Angelo Peruzzi holds his head after Italy were defeated by the Czech Republic at Liverpool's Anfield Stadium June 14 (Reuters photo)

tion.

"Things did improve in the second half and because of the quality of play I believe we deserved a draw," he added.

Sacchi criticised the schedule which saw Italy play their first two Group C matches within four days while their rivals Germany were given a week.

"Germany certainly had a more favourable calendar than us. They played before us and had a longer rest and have been able to see what our results are."

Czech coach Dusan Uhrin said his team had tried to out-think the Italians and had deliberately caught them in the offside trap to set up the fourth-minute goal by Pavel Nedved.

"We practised that and

knew the Italians would play the offside trap," he said.

He said he was not surprised by the Italians' line-up. "I thought there would be two or three changes because of the short time-lag between games."

"The Italians proved that even with 10 players they can play their game."

Midfielder Patrik Berger concurred. "The Italians played a brilliant game but we were very disciplined and vigorous and that kept us in it," he said.

Could they now beat the Russians next Wednesday? "Yes, we have to — there is nothing else for us to do," Berger said.



British children line-up to get autographs from the German national team following a practice session in preparation for their match against Russia Sunday (Reuters photo)

Klinsmann back to lead Germany against Russia today

MANCHESTER (R) — Germany welcome back captain and chief marksman Juergen Klinsmann with open arms as they bid to take the initiative in European Championship Group C with a victory over Russia on Sunday.

The Bayern Munich striker played a key role in the Germans' qualifying campaign but missed last weekend's opening 2-0 victory over the Czech Republic because of suspension.

Coach Berti Vogts is clearly relieved to have the former Tottenham Hotspur favourite back in his line-up because of his tactical abilities as well as his gift to score crucial goals when it matters.

"Juergen is the leading personality in our team. He is a commanding figure, not just in attack but in our defensive play as well," Vogts said. "He is a very important motivator."

Vogts' team have a great chance to go top of the group with six points after Italy's upset defeat by the Czechs at Anfield on Fri-

day. A victory would help the Germans take a huge step towards the quarter-finals.

The 1990 World Cup winners have adopted aggressive pressing tactics in recent seasons and they will put the Russians under pressure from the moment their defenders gain the ball deep in their own half. Vogts said he was not worried that six of his players have yellow cards from the first game, including wing-backs Christian Ziege and Stefan Reuter and defender Markus Babel. They certainly will not be afraid to close down the Russians, he said.

"There is no rule about not being able to close down players when you have a yellow card," he said. "We are very happy at the moment and we're all in good shape. We have a good chance of beating the Russians."

Vogts has been refusing to name his team in advance but no major changes are expected. At the back Babel will play from the

start in place of veteran Juergen Kohler who has been knocked out of the tournament with a knee injury. Italy-based striker Oliver Bierhoff could get the nod over veteran Stefan Kuntz to partner Klinsmann up front. The Russians also welcome back key defender Yuri Nikiforov after suspension and coach Oleg Romansev may be tempted to play forward Sergei Kiryakov from the start.

After coming on as a substitute, Kiryakov had a superb second half against Italy down the right flank. He also knows the German players well since he earns his living in the Bundesliga with Karlsruhe. The Russians said some of their players were not in the right frame of mind when they lost to the Italians. That is unlikely to be the case at Old Trafford.

"This is do or die for us. Make or break. It is by far our most important match," said their Everton midfielder Andrei Kanchevskis.

Euro 96 England set for last eight

LONDON (R) — A diving header from Alan Shearer and a stunning volley from Paul Gascoigne gave England a hard-fought 2-0 win over "naughty enemy" Scotland at Wembley Stadium on Saturday.

It was the biggest international played in Britain since the 1966 World Cup final.

The victory virtually guarantees the hosts a place in the last eight of Euro 96 and means that Scotland's interest will almost certainly end after their last Group A match against Switzerland next Tuesday.

The match turned in three dramatic minutes late in the game after Scotland skipper Gary McAllister saw his 77th minute penalty saved by David Seaman.

Still reeling from the disappointment of that miss, Scotland failed to cut out a Darren Anderton pass to Gascoigne, who swept the ball over Colin Hendry's head, ran round the Blackburn defender and smashed the ball past Andy Goram for England's second goal.

Shearer, who scored for England in their 1-1 draw against Switzerland last Saturday, opened the scoring again after 53 minutes when he dived at the far post to head home a cross from Gary Neville.

England manager Terry Venables said: "We won with two great goals — Gazza's was brilliant. We played superbly in the second half."

Scottish manager Craig Brown added: "The penalty was the turning point. If we'd have scored that we probably would have won."

Gascoigne, Scotland's footballer of the year after helping Glasgow Rangers win the double last season, was one of a number of England players who came alive after the break.

Just as in England's opening match against Switzerland, the hosts were like two different teams in each half but, in contrast to last week, they saved their best for the second half in which they played better than they have done for months.

There was also a striking similarity with last week's match in that after England went ahead, their opponents were awarded a penalty.

Italian referee Pierluigi Pairetto judged that Tony Adams had hauled down Gordon Durie after 77 minutes, to the delight of the Scottish supporters behind the goal.

But their joy was short-lived as Seaman half-elbowed and half-punched McAllister's hard-hit kick high over his crossbar, leaving Scotland still looking at the end for their first goal in five matches.

But Scotland's failure to find the net — Durie watched in disbelief as Seaman appeared to suspend himself in mid-air and scoop a header to safety after 66 minutes — consigned them to defeat for the 44th time in the 108th meeting between the countries, and the first since 1989.

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'Becker wants to be Lord of Wimbledon'

LONDON (R) — Triple Wimbledon tennis champion Boris Becker may buy his next title — Lord of Wimbledon — from princess Diana's brother, according to British newspapers.

The German who at the age of 17 became the youngest winner ever of the men's title in 1985 is interested in the ancient title being put up for sale by Earl Spencer, brother of the estranged wife of heir to the throne Prince Charles.

The honorary aristocratic title that has been in the Spencer family for 200 years is expected to fetch up to 50,000 pounds (\$75,000) at an auction being staged during this month's Wimbledon championship.

The title would once have been held by the local lord of the manor but nowadays it carries no property or privileges.

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45 parties, 16 independents apply for Bosnia elections

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — Forty-five political parties and 16 independent candidates have submitted applications for the upcoming Bosnian elections, an official of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) said Saturday.

Joanna van Vliet, senior advisor for public relations of the OSCE mission in Bosnia, said the applicants had submitted their applications by the deadline that expired at 5:00 p.m. (1500 GMT) Friday.

Under the Dayton peace accord, a series of elections are to be held by Sept. 14 in both entities that compose Bosnia-Herzegovina — the Republika Srpska and the Croat-Muslim federation.

Ms. Van Vliet declined to say how many applied from each of the entities until a 13-day checking procedure is completed.

"We decided not to give breakdown or the names of the parties until the appeals period is over," Ms. Van Vliet said.

It will take the OSCE seven days to check whether the lists contain the required number of signatures, after which parties that are rejected have a three-day period in which to appeal. Election sub-commissions then have three days to decide on disputes.

Ms. Van Vliet called the application process "a significant step forward in giving the opportunity to citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina to participate in democratic elections."

"It might be that this is not an exact number and

that additional parties may be added to the list," she added, since the OSCE was updating information Saturday with reports from its regional centres throughout the country. The total number of applicants given on Friday was 31.

NATO Secretary General Javier Solana said Saturday the alliance would do its best to make a success of the Bosnian elections after international mediators scheduled the polls for mid-September.

"We are going to do our best within our abilities so that the elections are prepared and are a success," he told reporters in Sarajevo after meeting Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic.

Mr. Solana, accompanied by NATO's supreme allied commander General George Joulwan and NATO commander in Bosnia Admiral Leighton Smith, arrived in the Bosnian capital from Zagreb.

"We are approaching the mid-term of our mission. On Monday it will be D+180 and we wanted to evaluate in theatre how things were going and to prepare the second phase," Mr. Solana said.

"D" designates the date of the first deployment of NATO-led peace implementation force in Bosnia last December days after the Dayton peace accord was signed in Paris.

Mr. Solana's tour follows Friday's conference of mediators and the Bosnian sides in Florence which reviewed the Dayton peace process after six months.

The conference recommended elections for multi-

ethnic institutions should take place on Sept. 14, despite widespread human rights abuses and violations of the Dayton accord.

But Washington and its allies argued it was better to hold faulty elections than none at all because any delay would help separatists partition the country.

Mr. Solana said NATO will provide security in Bosnia for the elections.

"We are going to continue guaranteeing the freedom of movement for everybody with the exception of those who do not deserve that," he said referring to indicted war criminals.

U.S. serves notice

The U.S. coordinator for ex-Yugoslavia on Saturday told Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic that Washington wants hardline Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic ousted from power in the coming weeks.

John Kornblum told reporters that he stressed to Mr. Milosevic the need to implement decisions made at this week's Bosnian peace conference on elections, a disarmament agreement and the removal of Mr. Karadzic.

"I stressed to him very strongly the expectations of the United States and the international community and I told him that the patience of the international community on many aspects of the implementation was beginning to wear thin," said Mr. Kornblum, U.S. assistant secretary of state for European affairs. (Continued on page 7)



KURDS DEMONSTRATE: Kurds stage a rally against Turkey's policy on Kurdistan and the ban of the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) in Germany, in central Hamburg, on Saturday. The rally drew more than 40,000 people (Reuters photo)

Husseini: Arabs must adopt a clear position

DOHA (Agencies) — A senior Palestinian official said Saturday that the Arabs must adopt a clear position toward Israel before the hard-line prime minister-elect, Benjamin Netanyahu, officially takes over.

Faisal Husseini, minister for Jerusalem affairs in Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's cabinet, said this was essential "so that the situation does not deteriorate at this juncture after Mr. Netanyahu's assumption of the premiership."

Mr. Husseini, who arrived in Doha late Friday on the first leg of a Gulf tour, said he hoped that the Arab summit, due to convene in Cairo on June 21 will take well-defined positions on Jerusalem and the return of Arab land by Israel under the Middle East peace process.

Arab countries have been alarmed by Mr. Netanyahu's May 29 election victory over Shimon Peres, a key architect of the peace effort.

Mr. Netanyahu has declared he opposes trading land for peace with the Arabs, has vowed to keep Jerusalem "united under Israeli sovereignty" and says he opposes the creation of an independent Palestinian state.

The Palestinians want East Jerusalem as the capital of

the state to which they aspire in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Mr. Netanyahu has also declared that Israel will not relinquish the Golan Heights, a strategic escarpment it seized in the 1967 war from Syria in 1967.

Mr. Husseini said it was important to see what Mr. Netanyahu will do on those fundamental issues once he takes office.

"We should not pre-judge, even if we have our own vision, until we see the practices of the new Israeli government on the ground," he said.

Mr. Husseini, a member of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Executive Committee, said on Friday at Cairo airport he would discuss Palestinian claims over Jerusalem and "the Arab-Israeli confrontation, and the peace process and its development."

Mr. Husseini told reporters before heading for the Gulf: "We are asking for a clear and definite Arab position on the Palestinian issue and the question of Jerusalem."

Oman and Qatar have been building ties with Israel but other Gulf Arab states have taken a harder line, ruling out any normalisation with the Jewish state before comprehensive peace has been reached in the region.

U.S. seeks strong ties with new Israeli government

NEW YORK (Agencies) — The United States hopes to build ties with the government of Israeli Prime Minister-elect Benjamin Netanyahu that are as close as the bonds Washington enjoyed with the former leaders, Secretary of State Warren Christopher said Friday.

"The United States will work closely with Israel's new government," Mr. Christopher said in a major policy address to the Council on Foreign Relations here.

The administration had close relations with the governments of Prime Ministers Shimon Peres and his slain predecessor Yitzhak Rabin, said Mr. Christopher.

"We hope to build an equally strong and productive relationship with the new Israeli prime minister and his team," he added.

The top diplomat asserted that the United States remained committed to help Israel and the Palestinians implement two landmark peace accords and would work to strengthen Israeli agreements with Egypt and Jordan.

"We will continue to work toward a comprehensive peace through a resumption of negotiations between Israel and Syria

and between Israel and Lebanon," Mr. Christopher stated.

His speech came as Mr. Netanyahu put the finishing touches to a right-wing cabinet which he was to unveil at Monday's opening session of the 120-seat parliament.

The leader of the right-wing Likud Party defeated Mr. Peres despite Washington's strong support for the Labour Party leader as the guarantor of Israel's commitment to the Middle East peace process.

Mr. Christopher called on Arab countries ahead of their meeting in Cairo on June 21-23 "not to pre-judge the new government in Israel" and "to avoid actions or statements that close doors and risk polarising the situation and raising tensions."

Noting that peace in the Middle East would pave the way to prosperity, Mr. Christopher urged Israel to broaden trade with Jordan and its economic relationship with the West Bank and Gaza.

He added that the new Middle East Development Bank will open offices at the next Mideast economic summit in Cairo this fall.

The bank was established in October but it has yet to find firm financial backing.

COLUMN 8

'Queen Elizabeth to pass duties to Charles'

LONDON (R) — Britain's Queen Elizabeth plans to pass most of her duties on to her heir the Prince of Wales as she gets older, the Daily Express said. The newspaper said an unnamed courtier had told one of its reporters: "Although the queen will never abdicate, as Her Majesty gets older she will devolve more and more responsibility to the Prince of Wales." The queen celebrates her official 70th birthday Saturday. The courtier said the queen had discussed her intentions with Prince Charles, 47, currently in divorce negotiations with his estranged wife Princess Diana. Sorry newspapers have speculated that the queen might be reluctant to see her son inherit the throne in view of his marital troubles.

Minister intervenes in name row

COPENHAGEN (AFP) — For Pia Aggergaard it was not so much a question of minding her P's and Q's, more a matter of P's and H's — a question which took nine years of court wrangling and a ministerial intervention to resolve. Mrs. Aggergaard, mother of a nine-year-old boy, has finally won her battle to call him Christopher — with a double "ph". The ministerial intervention came Wednesday from Interior and Religious Affairs Minister Birte Weiss who decided enough was enough and relaxed a 1982 law outlawing ridiculous names. For Mrs. Aggergaard, from Grenaa in the centre of Denmark, life with Christopher has been a costly joust with the windmill of the law, costing her court fines of 100 kroner (\$16.8) a week since 1989. Exclusivity doesn't come cheap. In February, the court raised the fine to 500 kroner a week. The minister said Wednesday it was time to allow greater flexibility in the names parents could give their children, though she cautioned parents to spare a thought for the children lumbered with the name.

Canada to ban surrogate motherhood

OTTAWA (R) — Canadian Health Minister David Dingwall introduced legislation Friday to ban several controversial reproductive and genetic practices like paying someone else to have your baby. The bill would prohibit people from sex selection for non-medical reasons the buying and selling of eggs, sperm and embryos attempts to create an animal-human hybrid pinging human embryos in animals and creating embryos for research. "We are acting today to set boundaries on the use of new reproductive technologies," said Mr. Dingwall, acting on recommendations of a royal commission. The new law would also ban research on human embryos later than 14 days after conception on the grounds that the nervous system begins to develop then. This was likely to displease opponents of abortion, who say life begins at conception. One of the most controversial practices that would be banned is surrogate motherhood, in which a woman is impregnated either with an embryo from another woman's egg or by artificial insemination using her own egg — and then gives the baby up. Some of the practices "pose serious risks to human health and safety," a statement from Mr. Dingwall's ministry said. (Continued on page 7)

Edde, Aoun call for election boycott

BEIRUT (AFP) — Two key Lebanese Christian opposition leaders on Saturday called for a boycott of legislative elections expected this fall in protest over a new election law which the government hoped to vote next week.

The draft law calls for elections in all five governorates of Lebanon with the exception of Mount Lebanon — a Christian-dominated region with a Druze minority — where elections will be held on the basis of its six districts.

The revised law was taken to appease Druze leader Walid Junblatt who feared elections on a five-governorate basis could undermine his leadership over the Druze community which is also contested by the rival Arslan clan.

No official date has been announced for the elections but they are widely expected

to take place between the end of August and the beginning of October.

Calls to boycott the polls were made by Christian opposition leaders Raymond Edde, who heads the National Bloc, and Michel Aoun, a renegade army general who headed the government from 1987-1988.

Both live in exile in France. Mr. Edde denounced the draft law, saying it got the green light after a meeting last week in Damascus between President Elias Hrawi and Syrian counterpart Hafez Al Assad, whose country wields great influence over Lebanon.

"How can we pretend therefore that the next elections will be free and democratic," he asked, recalling that he had also spearheaded a massive boycott by Christians of the 1992 elections. "My aim is to give world

democracies the proof that the Lebanese people, once again, refuse to take part in polls directed and supervised by the Syrian authority," Mr. Edde said in a message published by the Beirut press.

He also slammed Israeli occupation of a buffer zone in South Lebanon and urged the Lebanese people to abstain from voting "for the sake of your dignity."

Mr. Aoun, meanwhile, told Al Safir newspaper: "I will boycott the elections because the draft law, if it is passed, resembles the policies of apartheid in South Africa."

Both men enjoy popular support in Lebanon.

Foreign Minister Fares Bouez, in a radio talk show Saturday, charged that the draft law violated the constitution and expected Christians to oppose it.

Iranian media condemn U.S. for sanctions bill

TEHRAN (R) — An Iranian newspaper on Saturday denounced a bill strengthening U.S. sanctions against Iran, saying it was inspired by "Zionist forces" and doomed to fail.

The bill "indicates that the Zionist forces are once again at work to influence presidential elections in the United States," the Tehran Times said in an editorial headlined "U.S. Secondary Sanctions: Flogging a Dead Horse."

It is "doomed for failure for three reasons: Iran's strength, enabling it to offset the sanctions vociferous international reactions to the U.S. domineering tendencies and the opposition of U.S. entrepreneurs, industrialists and academics to the Zionist-influenced sanctions," the English-language newspaper said.

A House of Representatives committee on Thursday approved a compromise bill boosting U.S. sanctions on Iran and Libya but giving the president considerable latitude in carrying them out.

The compromise bill, considerably modified from an

earlier tougher version, would target third country citizens investing in Iran and Libya, which Washington calls terrorist states.

The bill would target for sanctions persons investing at least \$40 million in a single year to significantly advance the oil industries of Iran or Libya.

Washington's European allies have reacted with anger to the pending Iran-Libya bill and to Cuba sanctions legislation recently signed into law.

Tehran has denied the terrorism charges and says U.S. companies have been the biggest losers in the affair because they have been frozen out of lucrative contracts with Iran.

"The world community has realised today that no country should assume that it has the right to tell companies in other countries how they should behave in the Third World," the Tehran Times said.

The U.S. move is "contrary to the provisions of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and could destroy free commerce," the paper added. "We are sure Euro-

pean and other industrial countries will not allow it."

The Times described the authors of the bill as a "bunch of crooks totally subjected to the influence of Zionist pressure groups."

Republican Senator Alfonse D'Amato was a key proponent of the measure which was pushed through Congress with the help of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the largest pro-Israel lobbying group in the United States.

The United States, has repeatedly called on its Western allies to join its year-long embargo to isolate the Islamic republic.

But the European Union has resisted the pressure opting instead for a "critical dialogue" to moderate Iran's stand.

"Europe has already reacted with anger and continues its so-called 'critical dialogue' with Iran," said the moderate daily Iran News. "We are sure that Europe will follow its own interests and give an appropriate response to Clinton's short-sighted policy" on Iran.

Mubarak cautions journalists to 'respect values'

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak cautioned the press on Saturday to "respect society's values" after ordering his government to drop a controversial press law decreed by journalists as repressive.

Mr. Mubarak asked "only that journalists respect society's values and that their future criticisms against corruption do not attack the private lives of individuals or the prestige of state institutions."

Mr. Mubarak made the comments during a meeting with the executive council of the journalists union and other intellectuals, Information Minister Safwat Al-Sherif told the press.

The president, "with his refusal to affront freedom of the press," had "ordered his government to put forward a new draft law" which reduces penalties for "press crimes", including libel, back to their level before a 1995 law which greatly stiffened them.

The 1995 law imposed penalties of up to 15 years in prison for libel and raised an unprecedented protest by journalists. Two weeks ago, a new draft law was put before parliament to replace it, but journalists complained it was no better.

The U.N. Conference on Cities ended on a low note on Saturday after haggling over the Middle East, housing rights and abortion obscured success in raising the profile of much-maligned local authorities.

A heated row over references to Middle East disputes between developing countries and the developed world, which threatened to derail a final agreement at the Habitat II conference, was defused by a last-minute compromise late on Friday night.

Habitat II Secretary-General Wally N'dow, visibly relieved at the adoption of the agenda, played down the wrangling to focus on

the conference's achievements. "It's natural to have such troubles," Mr. N'dow told reporters. "But this is a new era of solidarity, a new era of cooperation."

The conference end was delayed until early Saturday from Friday afternoon by the dispute.

The U.S. bitterly opposed a wording Arab countries wanted to include in the final declaration condemning foreign occupation of land, with implications for Israel and the Middle East peace process.

"This is a political issue that belongs in the Security Council. It doesn't belong in a human settlements conference," top U.S. women's rights campaigner Bella

Abzug told Reuters.

Discussion on how to deal with pollution, poverty and overcrowding in megacities for the next millennium were often overshadowed by side issues.

The U.N. says that by the year 2025, urban dwellers are expected to number around five billion. Eighty per cent of them will live in developing countries.

A housing rights dispute between the U.S. and developing countries, backed by the European Union, was resolved last week by a compromise wording which fell short of obliging governments to providing housing for the poor.

The Vatican and Washington also clashed over refer-

ences to reproductive health care that implied that children could have state-paid abortions without parental consent.

Mr. N'dow sought to smooth over the disputes in his last address to delegates, stressing Habitat II had forged a pioneering link between government and non-governmental groups, giving local authorities an official U.N. platform for the first time.

The success of this partnership in Istanbul prompted U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali to weigh giving an official voice to municipalities in future U.N. discussions, a senior U.S. official said. (Continued on page 7)

Political haggling mars end of U.N. Conference on Cities

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